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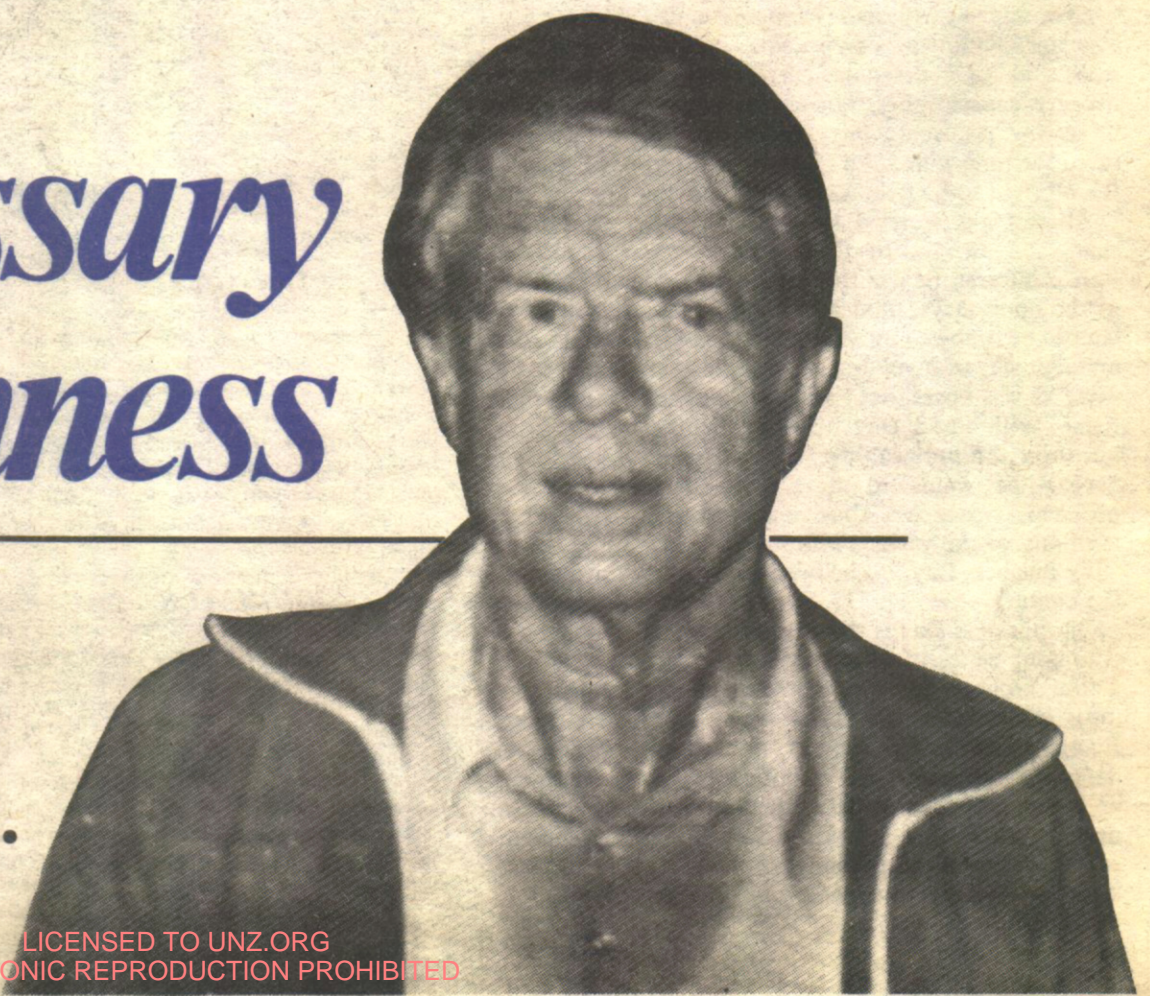
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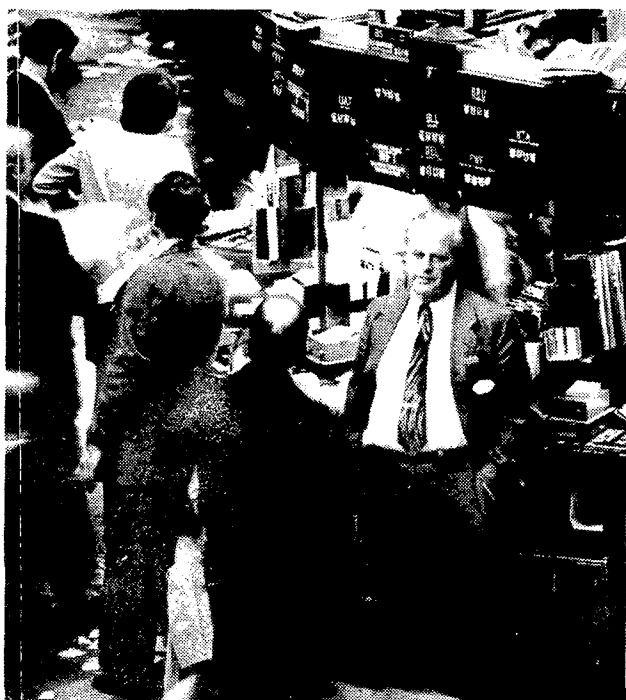
Unnecessary Roughness

Carter revives
a discredited
foreign policy.

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THE INSIDE STORY



Steve Kagan

The New York Stock Exchange.

A starting place for the politics of the '80s

By David Moberg

Big business is big news these days. Ford Motor Company is on trial for homicide in the deliberate construction of the fire-bomb Pinto. Hooker Chemical and others stand accused of conscious poisoning of whole communities with their waste products.

But the biggest news is not that corporate misdeeds are finally getting public exposure. Rather, corporate America is increasingly on the offensive, actively fighting unionization of workers with a big bag of dirty tricks, attempting to turn back progress on occupational safety and health, reaping gluttonous oil profits, urging massive social welfare budget cuts in order to make possible the breaks for business and the rich, and even creating their own "public interest" advocacy groups and an "energy awareness" squadron of pro-nuclear partisans.

Not only on Milton Friedman's new TV series but also throughout the news media, government, universities and, of course, the corporate world, there is a massive consciousness-raising (or lowering) campaign underway. As usual, Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* captured the tone with John Connally's executive T-group: It's all right to be rich. You can do anything you want.

All this has worried Michael Jacobson for several years. As director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, he was the initiator in the years 1975-77 of the Food Days, modeled on the original Earth Day, later to be followed by Sun Day. He saw the "Day" format as a way of involving new people in an issue, but he says, "I was upset that Earth Day was so totally superficial. With Food Day we tried to take people from nutrition and hunger down to the causes."

Now he wants to start with the cause of the problems—excessive, abusive corporate power—rather than any of the various symptoms. Hence the birth of "Big Business Day," scheduled for April 17 throughout the country.

Big Business Day is shaping up as the latest in an encouraging series of coalitions of labor unions, citizen action groups and public interest organizations, the most successful of which has been the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition. It plans to "put big business on the defensive" for industrial pollution of the environment and workplace, corporate crimes (price-fixing, bribes, undermining public health and safety), unemployment, exploitation of other countries, misleading corporate advertising and propaganda, union-busting, monopoly

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pricing and autocratic subversion of democracy.

Sponsors of Big Business Day include Ralph Nader, John Kenneth Galbraith, UAW president Doug Fraser, United Food and Commercial Workers president William Wynn, Coalition of Public Employees leader James Farmer, Robert Georgine (head of the AFL-CIO building trades department), Machinist president William Winpisinger, AFSCME president Jerry Wurf, Barry Commoner, Cesar Chavez, Julian Bond, Michael Harrington, David Brower of Friends of the Earth, Ira Arlook of the Ohio Public Interest Campaign, Midwest Academy director Heather Booth, Americans for Democratic Action president Patsy Mink, Rep. John Conyers, Consumer Federation of America president Kathleen O'Reilly—and others from religious, senior citizen, and women's groups.

Difficulties.

To counter business propaganda that big government and big labor are the sources of all evil, Big Business Day will encourage a wide variety of local and national activities focusing on the dangers of corporate power. It won't be easy, organizers believe, because unlike the previous "Days" there isn't as concrete a focus. Also, many potential allies—including some environmentalists, religious organizations and even prominent black groups—might agree with Big Business Day critiques of American society without believing that corporate power is the central cause (or without wanting to jeopardize relationships they may have with big corporate donors).

In addition to teach-ins, debates, and demonstrations, such as symbolic "bread lines" at banks that redline communities, Big Business Day will name a "Terrible Ten" list of corporate malefactors (such as J.P. Stevens, Hooker, Johns Manville or the Lykes Corporation). There will also be a Constitutional Convention in Washington during which "stakeholders"—that is, everybody who has a stake in what corporations do—will debate resolutions on what they would do if they directed the corporations and "to demonstrate how corporations could operate in a profitable manner and be a bit more humanistic," according to organizer Charlie Garlow.

The centerpiece of the Convention will be a "Corporate Democracy Act" designed to reform the operation of the 300 biggest corporations so that top managers will be legally more accountable for their actions, more information will be publicly disclosed, communities would have defenses against plant closings and all employees would have protection against arbitrary punishment. It would be a "Landrum-Griffin Act for our largest corporations," advocates say, alluding to the 1959 law aimed in part at insuring union democracy.

New federal chartering of corporations is needed, the drafters of the act argue, because big companies are, as Edmund Burke once said, simply states disguised as merchants and these private states are undemocratically governed. But the democracy the act prescribes is mild: more independent directors with greater resources to question the managers (who are described as the real holders of power), assignment of "responsibility for representing a particular social concern" to nine of the outside directors and various mechanisms to increase shareholder power (such as cumulative voting, which increases the chances of minority blocs being represented on the board of directors). The act was written so that it has at least enough political plausibility and potential good benefits to ruffle the feathers of corporate lobbyists, but it is a pale version of democracy to inspire much popular agitation.

Organizers don't simply want to criticize Big Business, they say. They want to offer alternatives—going into business for yourself, coops, unionization, worker

self-management, alternative technology, small business, "free enterprise in the true sense," as various organizers and the publicity materials indicate.

What's missing?

You may notice that one alternative to corporate domination, socialism, isn't on the list. Although some of the supporters are socialists and see their reforms as heading toward socialism, Big Business Day organizers clearly are chary of having the event identified as socialist.

Big Business Day is not anti-capitalist; it is anti-corporate. As the introduction to the Corporate Democracy Act argues, "The issue is autocracy vs. democracy. Not regulation vs. freedom or capitalism vs. socialism." What Big Business Day seeks is "corporate accountability"—and a little more free space for small business and various cooperative projects.

Many socialists will feel that it doesn't go far enough. But it does take important first steps. There are lots of activists even within the "progressive" spectrum of American politics who don't understand much about the power, goals and past or present misdeeds of the major corporations. One environmental sponsor said he was "embarrassed and shocked at the environmental groups that don't see big business as a problem."

Some of the participants may disagree—on nuclear power, on the relative evil of bigness in itself, or on the comparative merits of reforming the corporations or starting alternatives. But Big Business Day will once again bring together a broad range of public action groups with central sections of the labor movement (and not just the usual small list of the most progressive unions) to point the finger of blame for America's problems at corporate power. That's not a bad place to begin the '80s.

For more details, contact Big Business Day, 1346 Connecticut Ave. N.W. Room 411, Washington, D.C. 20036. Their telephone number is 202/861-0456

Meany's passing

George Meany, for 24 years president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, died on Jan. 10 at age 85, shortly after turning over the gavel to Lane Kirkland. In both his strengths and his limitations, he reflected much of the character of the American labor movement—more concerned with organizational stability than with social transformations, slow to join in on many important social and political issues but in due time a frequently solid force on behalf of progressive legislation, a tough critic of business but even more obsessed with fighting communism. (*In These Times*, Nov. 14, 1979).

Perhaps it was simple modesty, but in his impromptu comments at his last AFL-CIO convention, Meany made it seem that his main accomplishment, unifying the labor movement, was more a coincidence of the deaths of AFL and CIO rival chiefs than the result of his miracle-working. Meany's penchant for protecting the interests of these labor leaders he held together helped to alienate many union members from the labor movement, just as his hawkish support of the war in Vietnam lost the labor movement support from young people, the emerging left of the '60s and many liberals who would otherwise have been solid allies.

Meany's long tenure in office assures him a solid spot in the history books, but it will be more for presiding over a movement that had become consolidated and slowed down than for boldly advancing workers' interests.

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EDITORIAL

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BUREAUS

BOSTON: Sid Blumenthal, 8 Thayer Place, Brookline, MA 02146, (617) 738-9707.
DENVER: Timothy Lange, P.O. Box 6159, Denver, CO 80206, (303) 388-3850
NEW YORK: George Carrano, Jon Fisher, 784

Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10025, (212) 865-7638.

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IN THESE TIMES

Carter rekindles Cold War

By John Judis

JIMMY CARTER TOOK OFFICE IN January 1977 with a foreign policy designed to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors. "For too many years," Carter told a Notre Dame audience on May 22, 1977, "we have been willing to adopt the flawed principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our values for theirs."

Carter pledged his administration to pursuing detente, disarmament, and human rights; he promised not to subordinate "trilateral" relations with Japan, Canada, and Western Europe or "North-South" relations to the less developed countries to the "East-West" rivalry with the Soviet Union. "Being confident of our future," Carter said, "we are free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in our fear."

Carter pledged a reduction in defense spending and American arms sales; he expressed skepticism about the MX missile; he promised that there would be no future Vietnam during his administration.

A review of Carter actions from June 1977, when Sec. of Defense Harold Brown committed the U.S. at a NATO meeting to an annual three percent increase in its defense budget, to October 1979, when Carter cancelled a Soviet computer order to protest the presence of its brigade in Cuba and authorized up to \$245 million in arms sales to Morocco's King Hassan, shows a steady erosion of the original policies and framework.

Defense spending was increased, arms sales have risen annually, aid has been extended to anti-communist despots, the MX missile was given the go-ahead, a plan to station missiles in Europe was rammed through NATO in spite of Soviet offers to negotiate, and relations with China were pursued not simply to further trade and communication, but to isolate the Soviet Union.

The seizure of the American hostages in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has accelerated this erosion. In December, Carter announced projected defense increases of five percent for the next five years. The defense budget would include funds for a rapid deployment force capable of spot-interventions in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. Carter committed himself to building up a naval presence in the Indian Ocean, which he had earlier pledged to "demilitarize." He authorized production of the FX, a fighter plane designed solely for export. He proposed \$400 million in aid to Pakistan's General Zia. He instructed Secretary Brown to propose "complementary actions" to the Chinese against the Soviet Union, and he agreed to sell the Chinese a computer with military applications. He asked American allies to participate not only in a grain embargo against the Soviet Union, but to cancel their exports and call in their loans. And he abandoned SALT II and other arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Brzezinski and the romantics.

Carter's original foreign policy was derived from two sources: the Eastern academics along with disillusioned former State Department officials clustered around the journal *Foreign Policy*, and the facile Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Executive Director of the Trilateral Commission. Both Brzezinski and the *Foreign Policy* group, later dubbed the "romantics" by their critics, accepted the traditional goals of American foreign policy—the creation of a healthy world terrain for American capitalism—



'I THINK I'D RATHER STAY UP HERE AND PLANT THE TOMATOES, ANYWAY!'

but they differed with the strategy of both the old Cold Warriors and Henry Kissinger.

The *Foreign Policy* group, which included future State Dept. appointees Richard Holbrooke, Paul Warnke, Richard Moose, and Leslie Gelb, argued against making East-West relations the centerpiece of American foreign policy; they saw the Soviet Union as a decaying society with a conservative and cautious leadership who could be brought into increasingly cooperative relations with the U.S.; they argued that even Soviet-backed Third World nations, if permitted to do so by a tolerant American foreign policy, would eventually gravitate to an American-led capitalism because of the latter's economic and moral superiority.

Brzezinski, who had been a Vietnam hawk and opponent of detente, came in the '70s to share the *Foreign Policy* group's criticisms of Kissinger's *realpolitik* and his Cold War obsession with East-West relations. But Brzezinski supported Kissinger's strategy of linking SALT negotiations to Soviet "good behavior," and he supported Kissinger and Nixon's use of the "China card" against the Soviet Union.

In his first six months in office, Carter leaned toward the trilateral, North-South, human rights side of the Brzezinski-*Foreign Policy* views, but political problems at home and what seemed to be setbacks overseas caused Carter to alter his policies.

The most important cause was the worsening spiral of Soviet-American relations, which was partly the result of Brzezinski's provocations, partly the result of Soviet and Cuban actions, and partly the result of the new importance both countries attached to the Mideast and its oil supplies.

Carter was angered by the use of Cuban troops in Ethiopia and Angola, allegedly in training the Zaire rebels. Carter officials also suspected Soviet instigation of South Yemen's attacks on North Yemen. And they came to see the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan not merely as the attempt to shore up a potentially rebellious border state, but as an initial intrusion into the Persian Gulf.

Undoubtedly, some of these Soviet actions were inspired by Brzezinski's China Card, American proxy-successes in the Sudan, Somalia, and Zaire, the isolation of the Soviet Union from the Mideast peace process, and the plan for Euromissiles. But they were nevertheless seen as evidence against the *Foreign Policy* group's optimism about Soviet intentions and detente and as confirming the darker side of Brzezinski's own views.

The success of liberation movements

in Nicaragua and Iran also shook Carter's convictions. These movements were partly aided by the administration's human rights rhetoric and by its insistence on non-intervention, but they brought to power regimes ostensibly hostile to the U.S. The Shah's fall and the seizure of the hostages seemed finally to invalidate the State Department romantics.

Finally, the romantics' view not only didn't seem to fit events, it also had difficulty competing with the hard-line views for popular sympathy. The Vietnam War had shattered both the hopes and fears on which American foreign

policy was based. As memories of the atrocities committed by the U.S. in Vietnam faded, Republicans and conservative Democrats were able to win popular support with rehashed Cold War rhetoric.

With his own popularity sagging, Carter tried to steal some of the hardliners' thunder by moving closer to their views and adopting their policies. Invariably, as occurred in the flap over the Soviet brigade in Cuba, Carter's narrowly political actions ended up worsening American-Soviet relations and created,

Continued on page 6.

UNITED NATIONS

Decisive U.N. vote on Afghan crisis

By Michael Shuster

UNITED NATIONS

THE U.N. IS USUALLY VERY PREDICTABLE. It is easy to tell ahead of time who will support most resolutions that the General Assembly considers—and who will condemn them. No one here doubted that the resolution condemning the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the recent Emergency Special Session of the assembly would pass. What was surprising was the point spread: 104 in favor, 18 opposed, with 18 abstentions. It was an overwhelming and stunning defeat for the Soviet Union, a victory of sorts for the U.S., which has been most vocally critical of Moscow, and—just as important, some observers here believe—a victory for the nonaligned nations movement as well.

From the beginning on Jan. 10 of the four-day debate—the Emergency Session was convened three days after the Soviet Union vetoed a similar resolution in the Security Council—it was clear that all the nations of the West and most in the Third World weren't buying the Soviet explanation of its Afghan intervention.

Soviet ambassador Oleg Proyanovsky had argued before both the Security Council and the Assembly that Soviet troops had been invited into Afghanistan by the government in Kabul—the same government that several days later was overthrown. Proyanovsky charged that the U.N. had no business dealing with the Afghan crisis, and he charged that "Washington and Peking were interfering in the internal affairs," of another nation.

That charge was too much for some western delegates. U.S. ambassador Donald McHenry called it "sheer hypocrisy" and British ambassador Anthony Parsons labelled it "breath-taking."

"Which would appear more to fit the category of interference in Afghan internal affairs," queried Parsons, "the incursion into that country of five Soviet divisions or the chorus of protest from the world community at that action?"

The parade of condemnations.

Indeed, as nation after nation took the rostrum to condemn the Soviet actions, Parsons was proved right. And not all those on the list of speakers were nations that have traditionally been counted as pro-western.

Outside of the nations of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union only received support for its actions from nine nonaligned nations: Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Granada, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen and of course Afghanistan itself. Among those that condemned the Soviets were Tanzania, Iraq and Jamaica. Nicaragua, Algeria, Congo and Syria—all generally considered to be close to Moscow—were among the abstentions. Ironically, Iran voted against the Soviets despite Proyanovsky's veto a day earlier of U.S.-sponsored economic sanctions against Iran.

Several Third World nations were notable for their independent stance. Nigeria was the country that most attempted to straddle East and West. "No country has assisted the Third World more than the

Continued on page 12.

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LABOR



Richard Stromberg

Carter cuts jobless benefits

By Richard Kazis

WASHINGTON

A REVISION OF DEPARTMENT of Labor regulations on unemployment benefits, published in the January 3 *Federal Register*, has brought to the surface a long-simmering conflict between organized labor and the Carter administration.

The regulation, which goes into effect February 3, changes the way the Department of Labor computes the "rate of insured employment"—the figure that triggers extended employment benefits at both the national and state levels. By eliminating from the count those long-term unemployed who are already receiving extended benefits past the regular 26-week benefit period, the new regulation will effectively limit the availability of extended benefits in the future.

For the government, this change will mean a savings of somewhere between \$400 to \$800 million in 1981, savings that in the proposed 1981 budget will be reallocated to housing programs. For unemployed workers, it means a greater likelihood that, after 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits, there will be no cushion of 13 additional weeks of benefits.

The administration pushed hard for the change. It was first suggested to the Department of Labor one year ago by the Office of Management and Budget. Labor Secretary Ray Marshall opposed the new regulation and argued against it, but he was told by the White House that the savings were needed and the change had to be made.

Lane Kirkland, President of the AFL-CIO, protested vehemently. "The eve of a potentially deep recession," he said, "is not the time to deny meagre unemployment insurance to hundreds of thousands of jobless workers." Kirkland went on to say that the negative effect on the purchasing power of an estimated 305,000 unemployed workers who will be affected by the change this year—and a further 690,000 who will be affected in 1981—"could actually further deepen the recession with unemployment feeding on unemployment."

Labor is so unhappy with the change that it is seriously considering a lawsuit on the issue. And the unions' dissatisfaction goes deeper than the debate over this one regulation to a broad concern for maintaining the structure of the current Unemployment Insurance program and to growing alarm at the Carter administration's

Labor's reluctant support of new wage guidelines may crumble in the face of latest administration attack on unemployment insurance.

seeming insensitivity to the interests of labor.

The need to revamp the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program was recognized by Congress in 1978 when it established the National Commission on Unemployment Compensation, a group of business, labor and public representatives, to study all facets of UI and to recommend changes to the Congress. The commission, which is headed by Wilbur Cohen, a former secretary of HEW now at the University of Michigan, issued two interim reports, in November 1978 and in July 1979. Because its final recommendations were not ready in July 1979, Congress extended the life of the commission for one year, requiring the final report to be issued by July 1, 1980.

The two interim reports did not please certain players on the Hill and in the administration, since they generally took a pro-employee stance. As a result, in the past months, rather than wait for the final recommendations, both the administration and Russel Long's Senate Finance Committee have gone ahead and proposed a variety of changes in UI regulations that could save the government money—and restrict the availability of benefits.

The AFL-CIO, the UAW and other labor groups have taken the position that no piecemeal changes should be made in the UI program—especially ones that cut benefits in a time of impending recession until the National Commission makes its final report. But both the administration and the congress seem intent on bypassing the commission.

On the issue of extended benefits, according to Geri Palast, a staff attorney for the National Employment Law Project in Washington, "the AFL-CIO thought they had an agreement, that DOL wouldn't issue the regulation." The administration's insistence on going ahead with the change for the 1981 budget and not waiting for the commission's report in July is taken by labor officials as an indication that the onslaught against Unemployment Insurance has already begun in earnest—and that the administration is again turning a deaf ear to the program of organized labor.

The recent compromise agreement on

wage increase guidelines for the coming year reached by the Pay Advisory Committee does little to contradict that conclusion. The 18-member committee—another body of labor, management and public representatives established last October as part of the "national accord" between labor and the administration—has reached an informal agreement on replacing the current, voluntary seven percent guideline for annual wage and benefit increases with a recommended range of 7.5 to 9.5 percent. It was originally thought by some observers that an upper limit of 10 percent would be recommended, but tough behind-the-scenes negotiations and a clear indication that 10 percent was unacceptable to the administration forced a compromise. Final adoption of the guidelines was set for January 22, after staff aides work out a "set of criteria" for determining where within the range specific wage settlements should fall.

Indications are that the administration is satisfied. Both labor and management representatives announced their joint approval of the suggested guidelines, but signs of strain were obvious. When public member Lloyd Ulman, a University of California economics professor, expressed the hope that pay agreements would often be made at the midpoint of 8.5 percent this year, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland dissociated himself from that sentiment. He saw the midpoint not as a guideline, but as a way of "evaluating progress" during the year.

The administration was eager to have consensus on the symbolic wage increase agreement so that labor would not be encouraged to bolt from the Carter camp during this election year. PAC chairman John Dunlop's decision to approve the more flexible wage guideline was clearly an attempt to quell disagreement on the committee. But that concession was not enough. In announcing his endorsement of Ted Kennedy early last week, UAW president Doug Fraser pointed to both the UI cuts and the wage increase settlement as evidence that the Carter administration had forfeited any claim to labor support.

UNIONS

Chrysler pact sets a bad precedent

The '80s may see more and more industrial firms seeking help from Washington—the basic issue raised by this mingling of public and private capital will be, in crude terms, bailout or take over.

By David Moberg

AUTO WORKERS AT CHRYSLER are now considering their share of the \$3.5 billion corporate rescue plan that is a landmark step in the transformation of the relationship of the government to private business. Continuing problems of major industries, stemming from past investment decisions, from increasing international competition and from the uncertainties likely in the coming decade, will probably make elements of the Chrysler solution more common. Government and public funds will be increasingly entwined with private capital—and the big question will be the terms of the marriage.

The terms for autoworkers, thanks to a concerted drive by certain legislators in both parties, are harsher than for any other group involved in the bailout plan. To aid the mismanaged and faltering auto firm, the United Auto Workers had already negotiated a contract with Chrysler that saved the company \$203 million in future wages and benefits. The latest concessions, which will cost UAW members another \$249 million, is the UAW share of the \$462.3 million contribution that Congress required of all unionized Chrysler workers. Another \$125 million must come from non-union employees. (Stockholders will forego dividends and suffer dilution of the stock's value.)

Chrysler workers consequently will delay their traditional productivity increase in wages further in the second and third years of the contract, give up all 17 of the paid personal holidays during the life of the contract, and give up a one-day bonus payment due this December. The UAW leadership, angry with the size of the cuts, nevertheless was pleased not to cut cost-of-living allowances or health and pension benefits. Also, the union maintains, Chrysler workers will enter the next negotiations at pay and benefit levels comparable to Ford and GM.

Local union leaders at Chrysler approved the new concessions 251 to five, but the vote by members of some locals may be much different. "I expect a sizable vote and a close outcome," said Charles Brinell, president of the Belvidere, Ill., plant where the Omni and Horizon are assembled. Workers there, who rejected the earlier contract, are angry because 25 new management personnel have been added since last September, and they feel there isn't equality of sacrifice in the plan. Canadian workers, feeling no obligation to follow dictates of the U.S. Congress, already refused further cuts.



Chrysler's share of the U.S. market has dropped from 11 to about eight percent over the last year, following a precipitous plunge in fall sales and the loss of 320 dealers.

Before the federal government will guarantee up to \$1.5 billion in loans to Chrysler, the corporation must come up with not only the employee sacrifices but also at least \$1.43 billion in non-guaranteed assistance from a specified variety of sources—domestic and foreign banks, sales of assets, state and local governments, suppliers and dealers and a \$50 million stock offering. Also, \$100 million in stock is to be made available for purchase to Chrysler's workers and unions.

Although Michigan and Delaware have promised loans, the corporation does not yet have any other public commitments of money. Even in the best of times, creditors and investors would be cautious about plowing more money into Chrysler, which will probably announce losses for 1979 of over \$1 billion. The corporation is much more heavily in debt than the other auto companies. (Its debt totalled 54 percent of its equity in 1977 compared with 12 percent at GM and 17 percent at Ford.) Indeed, some observers think that even if Chrysler obtains the loans, it may be sunk by the weight of the interest payments.

In addition, the auto industry is heading into a deep sales slump. Chrysler's share of the market dropped to around eight percent recently (from 11 percent in 1978) after a precipitous plunge in the late fall and the loss of 320 dealers last year. Competition from foreign companies, last year marketed 21 percent of all cars in the U.S., is likely to remain intense.

Although Chrysler clings to its plans to remain a "full-line" company, most observers expect that it will be forced to pare down and become more specialized. Thus the federal bailout would permit in a slightly more orderly fashion the reorganization that could otherwise have been brought about by bankruptcy or by prudent management. Many auto worker jobs are likely to be lost in any case, but Chrysler in some form will probably survive, possibly with more federal help.

Although the bailout was always given a good chance of passage, since Chrysler is so big and since it's an election year, the terms of the bailout were less certain and

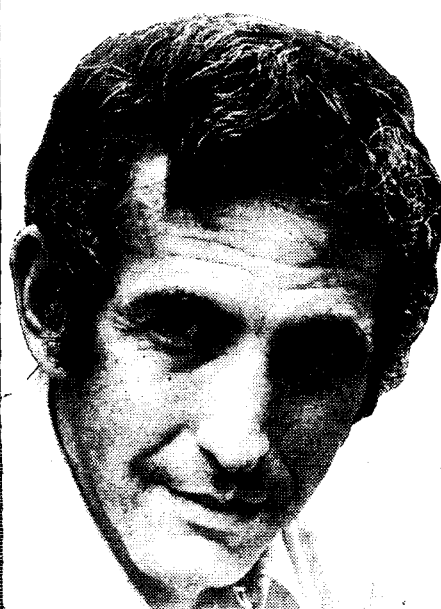
the more important part of the controversy. Throughout the discussion of the legislation, major bankers were unwilling to make any firm commitments. They consistently opposed imposition of any restraints on Chrysler's management or exposure of the banks to risk with quietly modulated assurances that such moves "would make our involvement less attractive." It was a case, Howard Symons of Nader's Congress Watch says, of "nothing less than blackmail by the banks."

Nevertheless, in addition to presenting a realistic operating plan, Chrysler must also present a satisfactory energy-savings plan. The detailed operating reports of the company as well as a long-term study of the industry mandated by the bailout act could expose much of the inner workings of the industry and lead to some progressive actions. The study is specifically intended to assess whether Chrysler could successfully make and sell a car similar to the "safety vehicle" already developed by the federal government. Also, Chrysler has to set up over four years an employee stock ownership plan worth at least \$162.5 million as partial compensation for workers' immediate losses. Chrysler UAW workers would thus own roughly one-sixth of the company. But more stringent conditions—as well as the UAW's original demand for public equity in the corporation and public directors—were dropped or never considered.

Continuing difficulties for the auto industry—as well as weaknesses in steel and other sectors of the economy—are likely to bring increased pressure for government loan guarantees, which have risen in the past four years from \$5.7 billion to an estimated \$20.8 billion. In addition, there is the likelihood of huge guarantees in connection with synthetic fuel development and other energy projects.

U.S. capitalists are increasingly unwilling to invest in basic production, especially in the more mature and internationally competitive industries, or in major, long-term projects with some risk. The government will thus move in, working hand in hand with major capitalists, to redirect and protect capital flows. There is pressure, from politicians like Sen. Adlai Stevenson and banker Felix Rohatyn, to rationalize this activity through a new federal agency, such as a revival of the depression-era Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

"In the '80s we're going to see a lot of mature, heavily industrial companies coming to Washington," Symons says, "and I don't think Congress is going to be able to say no. The question will be what sort of means Congress will use." It will also be how much public control will be exercised in these rescue missions and to what long-range ends. Or in crude terms, bailout or take over?



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CAMPUS POLITICS

By Patrick Lacefield

SOcialist youth groups have in the past often proved to be something of a problem for the parent organization. Witness the clashes between the British Labour Party or the German Social Democrats and their youth sections—or, closer to home, the old friction between the Young People's Socialist League, Students for a Democratic Society and their elders. By contrast, the Second Annual Youth Educational Conference of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) was relatively free of dissent from DSOC strategies and policies by a youth section beginning to be recognized as a significant force in campus activism.

Over 220 youth activists from 25 states and 50 campuses—mostly in the Northeast and Midwest—spent two days discussing left history, feminism, the state and transitional reform, Eurocommunism, the labor movement and other topics. Speakers included DSOCers Irving Howe, Ron Radosh and Jo Freeman, New American Movement activists Stanley Aronowitz and Barbara Ehrenreich, and others such as District 1199 Executive Director Moe Foner and author Louis Menashe.

DSOC's youth section now numbers over 1,000 members, most of them added within the last year. Of 30 campus chapters, the strongest are at Cornell, Harvard/Radcliffe, the University of Illinois, University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Wisconsin, and Columbia. "Locals have been involved in issues across the board," youth section organizer Joe Schwartz told *IN THESE TIMES*. "In Ithaca (Cornell) and at the University of Wisconsin, DSOCers were instrumental in pulling together Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition activities with unions. On the West Coast there's a lot of anti-apartheid and no-nukes work and at Harvard and

DSOC makes gains among students

Many new members at NY conference.



Michael Harrington addresses youth conference.

the University of Missouri campus chapters have been involved in community electoral work."

In his opening address to the conference, Harvard professor Michael Walzer said that the task of democratic social-

ists was "not to abolish democratic and liberal rights but to reshape and reincorporate these values within new community structures." Stanley Aronowitz argued for a fresh analysis of technology and its function under capitalism and socialism and

questioned the virtue of democratic socialist programs aimed at maintaining the "high standard of living of the Western working class. No working class," he observed, "has ever entered the historical stage without sacrifice or a qualitative change in consciousness."

One reason for the emphasis on theory rather than practice, a youth leader admitted, was that the rapid growth of the youth section has hampered much-needed internal education. And even if, as seemed the case, most of the conference participants accepted DSOC's focus on socioeconomic issues, coalition-building with the trade union movement and critical support for Ted Kennedy to build a left wing of the Democratic Party, the voice of the youth section has not gone unheeded within the organization. DSOC youth have been more forthright in pushing feminist issues and reproductive rights, as well as foreign policy concerns. The youth section passed a resolution condemning moves to revive the Selective Service that had strong pacifist overtones and implicitly advocated draft resistance should that choice become necessary. Strong youth pressure, along with the Three Mile Island accident, contributed to DSOC's decision to oppose nuclear development.

DSOC chair Michael Harrington observed that "students are beginning to feel that their personal problems are social problems" and predicted a renaissance of campus political action. The DSOC youth section is redoubling its efforts to prove Harrington right. In addition to building links with the United States Student Association and Nader's Public Interest Research Groups, DSOC youth are planning several major regional retreats to strengthen local chapters. And they have assigned major importance to organizing for "Big Business Day" on April 17.

"We are beginning to be a significant force," Schwartz explained, "within a modest, but growing, revival of the student movement."

Carter

Continued from page 3.

in effect, a self-fulfilling prophecy about Soviet intentions.

Brzezinski has emerged as the principal architect of American foreign policy. Some key "romantics" like Warnke, Gelb, and UN ambassador Andrew Young have either quit or been forced out; others have simply crawled into the woodwork.

But the new Carter policies don't rightfully belong to the fickle Brzezinski, who has a history of following diplomatic fashions. They are pretty much the policies Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon developed from 1968 to 1974: balance-of-power *realpolitik* using the Chinese against the Soviet Union; linkage; the subordination of North-South relations to East-West relations. The only difference may be the abandonment of

the "Nixon Doctrine" against the use of American troops for spot-interventions. The new Carter-Brzezinski policies can also be expected to face the same difficulties that the Kissinger policies did—and some new ones as well.

Carter's new foreign policy will further strain American relations with Western Europe and Japan. Both Western Europe and Japan enjoy a growing trade with the Soviet Union and its allies. (West Germany and Japan are the Soviet Union's largest trading partners.) These countries are understandably reluctant to go along with any demands for trade or credit sanctions against the Soviet Union, and Carter's requests have already met with polite refusals from Japan, West Germany, and France.

In addition, Carter's abandonment of SALT throws into question European support for American missiles on its soil. European countries saw these weapons as "bargaining chips" to gain Soviet concessions in the SALT III talks,

which were specifically aimed at NATO-Warsaw Pact reductions. But with SALT II forgotten, these missiles only increase the danger of a real war.

In both these respects, Japan and the NATO countries have a new incentive to cut their own deal with the Soviet Union rather than relying on American threats and negotiations.

Carter's new foreign policy will also create the same problems among Third World countries that Kissinger's policies did. American support for General Zia may cost the U.S. both India and Pakistan, just as support for Hassan may cost the U.S. Algeria, the Western Sahara, and a post-Hassan Morocco.

The huge increases in defense spending may soften the recession and aid embattled industries like McDonnell Douglas (which plans to use its DC-10 assembly as the basis for newly ordered cargo planes), but by promising new inflation, it will aggravate the dollar crisis. As the dollar continues to fall, the OPEC nations will finally abandon the dollar as their sole medium of exchange. This will cause a new burst of inflation in the U.S., and it will also solidify the European Monetary System as a rival currency bloc, increasing American-European tensions still further.

The threat to the dollar will also

severely restrict domestic policy options. Carter will have to reduce social spending and may have to impose wage-price controls.

And, worst of all, the new policies could lead to a world war. They could do so, as Michael Klare has suggested, by encouraging "anti-Soviet adventurism," or they could do so by encouraging Soviet acts of desperation.

Foreign policy impasse.

Carter's retreat to his predecessor's policies testifies to his own lack of imagination and political ability. But it also testifies to the impasse in which American corporate capitalism finds itself—forced to navigate between the Pollyannaish views of the romantics and warlike posturings of the hardliners.

Both views are based upon the traditional goals of American foreign policy. One side believes world capitalism can be saved through economic aid and the enunciation of lofty principles, the other through force and bluster.

The only way out may be the rejection of traditional foreign policy goals. Such a rejection would not require American acquiescence in Soviet invasions, but it would require a genuinely even-handed and democratic approach to all the world's nations—an equal rejection of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, and the Moroccan war against the Polisario.

Such a foreign policy will not be forthcoming from the Carter administration, and it is even less likely to emerge from the victors in the 1980 presidential election, who will if anything have further committed themselves to recapturing America's past glories. It will also not emerge from the members of the foreign policy establishment, whose commitments to corporate welfare are too great for them to see any alternative to a world ruled by the priorities of American multinationals. Like the policy it aims to replace, which developed in the early 1900s along with the rise of corporate capitalism it will have to grow out of a movement dedicated to changing America's internal as well as external practices.

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INDIA

Gandhi's landslide victory reflects voters' frustration

By Mervyn Jones

MAY 1977: INDIRA GANDHI, who has been ruling India under "state of emergency" dictatorial powers and has jailed the whole opposition leadership, calls an election. Clearly, she is reckoning on catching her opponents wrong-footed and scoring an easy victory, thus improving her dubious democratic credentials. But the Janata Party, though formed only during the campaign, inflicts a crushing defeat on Gandhi, who fails even to hold her own constituency. When the new Lok Sabha (House of the People) assembles, Janata has 304 of the 542 seats. Followers of Gandhi have about 60 and don't constitute the main opposition.

January 1980: New elections are held ahead of time because of the fragmentation of Janata. Indira Gandhi has been having a difficult time: she faces grave charges arising from her actions during the Emergency, has been convicted of malpractices during a 1978 by-election contest, has failed to reunite her Congress Party, has recently been deserted by a one-time supporter Devraj Urs, the much-respected chief minister of the important southern State of Karnataka. She wins a landslide victory, taking 341 Lok Sabha seats (probably a few more, since returns are incomplete as I write). Janata is reduced to 32 members.

How are we to explain these astonishing turnarounds? Is the Indian electorate the most volatile, and the Indian political scene the most unpredictable, in the democratic world?

First, an interesting footnote: Gandhi's victory was in fact predicted by opinion polls. But nobody took any notice; it's considered that the size and diversity of India's population make polling inapplicable. There will have to be second thoughts about that.

Next, we should remember that, under the first-past-the-post electoral system, the winning party's share of the seats exceeds its share of the votes. This is especially true in India, where it's not unusual for a seat to be contested by a dozen candidates. Figures for the popular vote are not yet to hand, but analysis of elections in the lifetime of Gandhi's father, Jawaharlal Nehru, showed Congress getting 70 percent of the seats from 45 percent of the votes.

Then, I note a contrast between the two elections in the record of Indian political commentators, who are as shrewd and alert as any in the world. The Janata victory was foreseen, at least in the final two weeks of the campaign; observers in towns and villages noted a rising "Janata wave." This time, there was no perceptible "wave" and the result took everybody by surprise. In fact, the campaign had been dull and unexciting and the numbers going to the polls were lower than usual.

Of course, Gandhi has won the election. And it's impossible to deny that among large sections of the Indian people she evokes real enthusiasm, even worship. But it's not unfair to suggest that Janata has lost the election more emphatically than Congress has won it. As old polls in all democratic countries are fond of saying, the voters don't put a government in—they turn a government out. India in 1980 may be an exceptionally emphatic proof of that dictum.

The Janata record.

Certainly, the Janata record has been appalling; few governments anywhere in the world have dissipated their goodwill more

rapidly and more completely. Instead of constructive policies, the leaders offered obsessions—notably Prime Minister Morarji Desai's obsession with prohibition. There was constant in-fighting between the three most prominent personalities: Desai, Jagjivan Ram and Charan Singh.

Up to 1979, it seemed that the rickety structure would hold up. The economy was in good shape, thanks partly to a run of good monsoons and partly to effective government at state level. But a ludicrous budget introduced by Charan Singh (made finance minister in January 1979) undermined confidence. Inflation, from which India had been more or less immune, mounted during the year to a 20 percent rate. And the luck with the weather has given out, with a poor monsoon and drought in many areas.

In July 1979, Desai was deserted by a majority of Janata members in the Lok Sabha and forced to resign. The party split between followers of Jagjivan Ram and Charan Singh, neither of whom seemed likely to muster a parliamentary majority. The president appointed Singh prime minister, but he did not dare to ask for a vote of confidence. It's strongly argued that it would then have been constitutionally correct for the president to call on Jagjivan Ram. However, he dissolved parliament and kept Charan Singh on as care-

important state in which it is politically dominant. West Bengal, in fact, seems to be the only state where Gandhi has done no better than in 1977.

Gandhi's return.

Now that Gandhi is riding high, it may be academic to point out that she might be heading for a jail sentence had the election turned out otherwise. But the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Emergency, headed by retired Chief Justice Shah, contains irrefutable evidence of con-

During the emergency, trains ran on time, and many voters value efficiency more than freedom.

taker premier pending an election. Since the election was not due until 1982, no voting rolls existed; it takes time to compile them with an electorate of over 300 million. The earliest practicable date for the poll was January 1980, which meant that India was governed for six months by a team lacking any mandate.

Jagjivan Ram was now leader of what remained of Janata, while Charan Singh's supporters formed the Lok Dal. (Both names mean People's Party.) Indian journalists to whom I talked as the election drew near mostly forecast that no party would gain a Lok Sabha majority—so that the next government would be a coalition produced by horse-trading—but that Janata would do somewhat better than Lok Dal. Jagjivan Ram, it seems, was expecting about 150 seats. With that, he might have struck a deal with Gandhi. The December 16 issue of a normally sound Indian weekly titles its cover story: "The many ways in which Babuji (affectionate nickname for Jagjivan Ram) could be our next PM."

Jagjivan Ram is a Harijan, or Untouchable in traditional parlance, and a Harijan prime minister would represent at least as great a shock to old prejudices as a black U.S. president. That may explain why president Sanjiva Reddy, who is a Brahmin, didn't call on him last summer. And it may, with other factors, explain why Jagjivan Ram took a worse thrashing in the election than Charan Singh, who has solid loyalty among the middle-rank castes who are the farmers of north India. The race—a race for a booby-prize—ended thus: Lok Dal 40, Janata 32.

In a House utterly dominated by Gandhi's supporters, it's worth noting that the Communist Party (Marxist) has 32 members, slightly improving its 1977 position. The CP—the more radical of India's two communist parties—has thus confirmed its popularity in West Bengal, an

important state in which it is politically dominant. West Bengal, in fact, seems to be the only state where Gandhi has done no better than in 1977.

Why, then, have so many Indians voted for her? Well, it's safe to say that those who were forcibly sterilized or beaten up

by the police didn't. But, as I noted when travelling in India in 1979, the state of non-government in the Janata period drove people to yearn for effective authority, decision-making, and trains arriving on time. (As a railway official told me with strong approbation, under emergency rules, wages of train crews were docked if the train came in late.) In India as much as anywhere else, a sizable element in the population values efficiency more than freedom.

Since 1977, Gandhi has repeatedly denied that she would introduce a new State of Emergency if given the opportunity. The denial is sincere, I believe; the 1975 Emergency was her desperate reaction to a threat of being driven from power. So the India of the 1980s will, hopefully, remain a democratic nation. It's also true, however, that Gandhi is authoritarian by temperament, intolerant of criticism, impatient of discussion. She can be expected, especially with her commanding majority, to run her government like a military staff, dismiss ministers who take an independent line, and get dissidents expelled from the party.

What worries me almost as much is her aversion to systematic political thinking. This is where she differs from another woman with whom she otherwise has points of resemblance, Margaret Thatcher. I know perfectly well what Thatcher's political philosophy is (my only complaint is that I don't like it) but I have never been able to discover what Gandhi believes—except that the prime minister should be Indira Gandhi.

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**ELIOT
ASINOF**

THE SUPER-bowl is obviously an overinflated event made to sell a product. There's so much more hoopla associated with the event than there is dedication to the athlete himself. The athlete is made to feel secondary to the hype. As a result, the game is not a commendable demonstration of the skills of the athlete. The extra week's preparation is typical of that. It's designed to spend more time on the hype than on the game, and it breaks the rhythm of the athlete.

In this case the Steelers are so far superior to the Rams that the game will probably be a farce. The nineand a half point spread is a fabrication—it indicates a reasonably close game and any better knows that the Steelers are so far superior that it isn't nearly enough to indicate it.

Eliot Asinof, who once played pro baseball, is the author of Eight Men Out, a history of the 1919 Black Sox scandal, and Bleeding Between the Lines, about his battle with producers about the TV movie version of the scandal.

**LYNDA
HUEY**

WHAT I'M finding, living in the city it's going to happen in, is that I'm already feeling the shock. It's only surprising that it's begun so early and that there's so much hype.

By the time of the Superbowl, everyone will have forgotten why they came to L.A. There will have been so many parties, so many incidents, so many articles leading up to the Superbowl, all for one three hour sports event, that the event itself will be anticlimactic. That's why they've been calling it a Superbore—and I think last year was the first it wasn't a bore in some time.

I think this is the athletic answer to the Academy Awards. Even people who don't have anything to do with sports will be drawn into it in some way. Every major celebrity in L.A. will be at the parties. I'll be handed 20 to 30 samples of free products between the week of the 12th and the 20th. People will use this as the place to get it known. It's also a time for people to get attention.

The people who will take it seriously here as an athletic event are the Rams and the Steelers. There are probably 150 people in total who will take it seriously, because it's work for them.

Lynda Huey is a contributing editor to Women's Sport magazine.

**DAVID
ISRAEL**

THE SUPER-bowl is fine—everybody makes a lot of money, players like playing in it and people like watching it. Unlike some other sports, the champion of pro football is decided by one single game, so it's very conclusive.

It epitomizes why people like sports—there's an immediate winner and loser. It's instant gratification. There's so much uncertainty in all the aspects of life. You make decisions all the time—business decisions, personal, social decisions—for which you don't get immediate answers. Sometimes you never find out if you made the right decision. In sports there's an answer within 60 minutes of play. The structure and order of sports makes it as appealing as all the pagantry and the color.

Some people like to say there's something dangerous and evil about the Superbowl—the vastness of the thing, how it totally dominates American society for some Sunday afternoon in January. But nobody ever proved it was dangerous. It's probably good for everybody in the country to be

doing the same thing for one moment. Probably every society has one thing everybody pays attention to at some point in the year. Maybe Mayday in Russia is like that, except that nobody knows who's gonna win that one. You get no points on the foot soldiers—tanks win.

The Superbowl is probably one of the better things on TV. It's very egalitarian. It's an event everybody cares about, regardless of their position in the social structure.

David Israel is a syndicated sports columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

**HOWIE
EVANS**

I'VE COVERED 10 of the last 13 Superbowls and have found them, especially in the last five years, to be a media circus. The NFL uses the Superbowl to promote itself. Many people question why they have to wait two weeks between the end of the playoffs and the playing of the game. The main reason is to pump up the game and keep professional football in the public eye, not only on the sports pages, but in the society columns and on the front pages.

It's a social sports happening, not just a game. You find all of the top show business people and politicians at the game. If you sit in the press room, you'll see everybody who's anybody in America passing through. The coup de grace is the NFL Ball known universally as "Pete's Party" (after Pete Rozelle, NFL Commissioner). Three or four thousand people attend and it gets bigger every year. It's the social event of the season. Someone once offered me \$200 for my ticket.

Howie Evans is a sportswriter for the Amsterdam News, a black newsweekly, and a basketball coach at Fordham University.

**LESLIE
VISSER**

THE SUPER-bowl is an event people can appreciate because there's a finality to it, as opposed to college football, where at the end of the season everyone dickers about who was number one. Sure, it's a highly profitable enterprise for everybody concerned, but it's only as commercialized as anything we do in America in the 1980s.

Other things are more important to worry about—the violence in football, for instance; how old kids should be before they start playing football—questions about the formation of the bone structure; the officiating—whether there should be some standardization of officiating in football.

And also from my own perspective—there's a separate issue entirely, one about women and sportswriting. I wish that the place women sportswriters have at most major events would be made clear. At the Cotton Bowl I was legally admitted to the locker room with an arm band, but once in the locker room a Houston coach, Bill Yelman, physically forced me out. It was clear discrimination. We need equal access.

Leslie Visser is a sportswriter for the Boston Globe.

**JACK
SCOTT**

FOR ME, THE Superbowl has both a social and a personal meaning. Living in the mountains of Pennsylvania, Superbowl Sunday afternoon is a time when my wife and I and our son Jonah will be able to take an enjoyable walk in the woods—secure in the knowledge that all those folks who run amuck in the forest with huge guns hunting for sport will be home (or in a bar) watching "The Game."

To understand the social meaning of the Superbowl on the other hand, requires a sacrifice that I made for all 13 previous Superbowls. You must watch the extravaganza on TV. The trick, however, is to ignore the game and pay diligent attention to the commercials. When the game is over, and the last commercial has run, you will understand the social significance of Superbowl Sunday.

Jack Scott is the author of The Athletic Revolution and Bill Walton: On the Road with the Portland Trailblazers.

**MARK
NAISON**

THE SUPER-bowl is the only national championship in which the level of play is normally worse than it is during the regular season. The two week gap between the playoffs and the Superbowl tends to take the fine edge off players' skills and make them more vulnerable to injury.

There are a few beneficial side effects to this promotional extravaganza. The holiday atmosphere surrounding Superbowl week gives lots of folks an excuse to work a little less hard, party a little more, and talk more openly to their friends and neighbors.

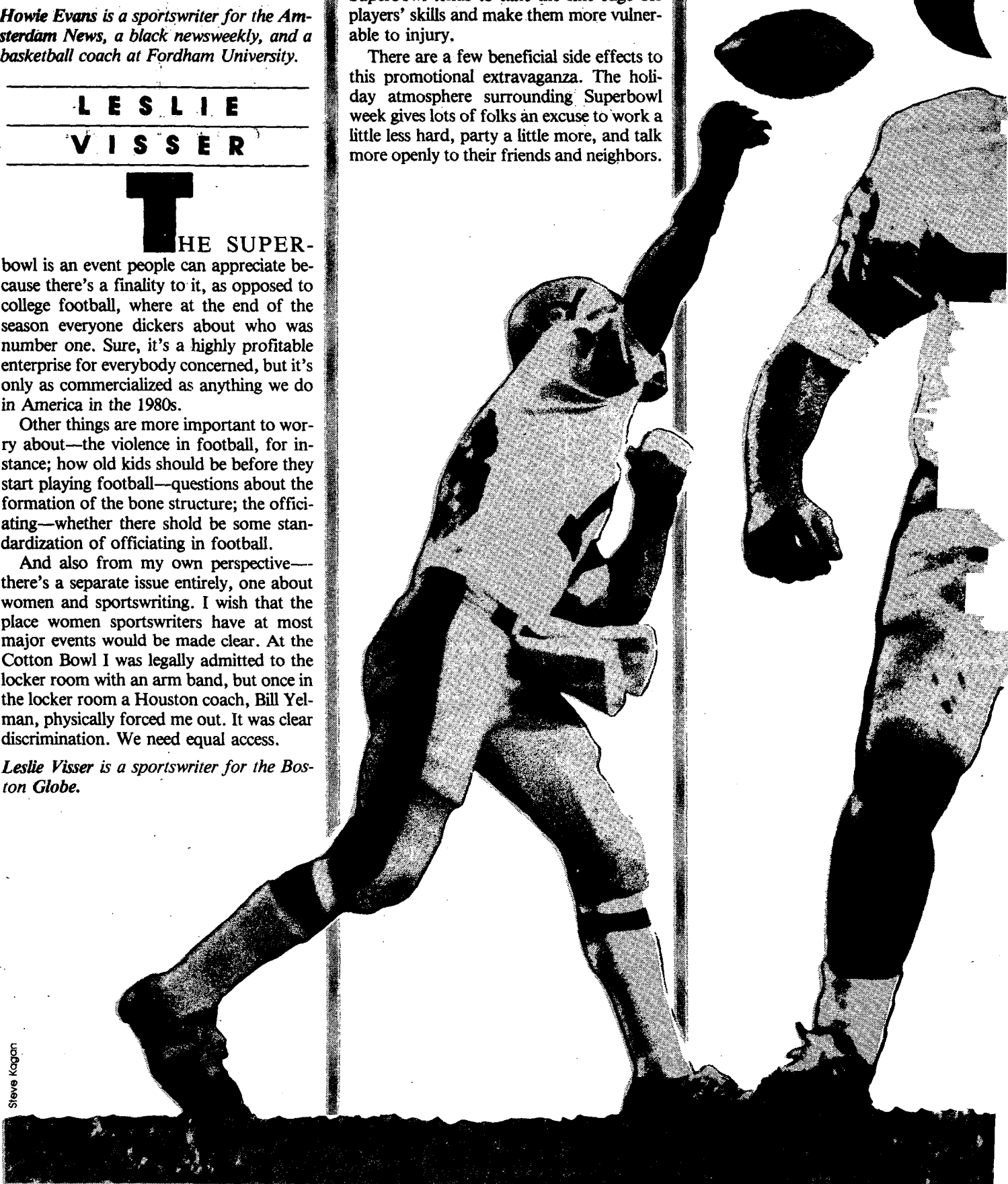
But in the stadium 80 men from farms and mill towns and ghettos perform a deadly ritual dance for an audience of America's rich. That we can enjoy this so much, that we can get off on the beauty and technique and raw power of their movements, while ignoring the cracking of bones and the tearing of tendons, bespeaks a dulling of our collective moral sense.

Mark Naison is sports coordinator for These Times.

**LESTER
RODNEY**

ICAN'T PRETEND, without massive hypocrisy, to be hostile to the event. I'll be blinking along with all the others at the "Stuporbowl" screen. Certainly the shallow, utterly vulgar commercial hype represents some of the worst in America. Yet the game itself is about highly talented, tough minded people straining in team unison for the top.

**WHAT
MEANIN'
SUPER**



Steve Kogan

spite of all the crap surrounding it, Joe Namath's underdog Jets' upsetting mighty Baltimore was no less a valid piece of Americana than the "Miracle Mets" doing it in baseball.

Yes, I see a Superbowl in our democratic socialist future. Co, Rams!

Lester Rodney is the former sports editor of The Daily Worker.

PHIL SHINNICK

THE SUPER-bowl represents an attempt to create new kinds of heroes and reinforce the football myth—the idea that physical prowess has great social significance. It calls upon primal feelings that have been rendered obsolete by technological change and uses them to stimulate nationalistic competition between states—especially between the U.S. and Russia. You sit around in steam rooms

these days and hear people talk about football and then talk about going to war—that's no exaggeration.

In addition, it's fundamentally sexist and elitist in that it excludes women from active participation and promotes voyeurism. Adult men are encouraged to identify with people playing a game they can't possibly play, both because of the cost of the equipment and the injuries they would incur. And the media coverage encourages them to believe that the best athletes are football players—even though other sports like lacrosse, tennis and handball require at least as much skill.

Phil Shinnick was a two time member of the U.S. Olympic team and a former world record holder in the broad jump.

ALLEN GRAUBARD

THE SUPER-bowl epitomizes the gigantism, the social tumor growth that has taken over what could be a basically good thing—watching a game, the pleasure you can get by seeing a quality performance. There's so much hype to blank out to enjoy the game at all.

It also emphasizes the winner rather than the play. At the end of the game the media go into the winner's locker room. Why isn't the climax of the whole thing the image of players who have just given the fans a great satisfaction and become comrades by playing a good game with each other?

We get a two-sided image of sports, as if it were a war. In the end, the losing team is shown as having nothing, as having lost everything. To lose is to die. You had something, but now it's ashes in your mouth. There should be a joy in playing—that's deep in the activity of play itself. People have to be socialized out of knowing that we're all winners in a good game.

Allen Graubard is a Berkeley writer who has written on the subject of competition and education.

STEPHANIE TWIN

COULDN'T care less about the Superbowl. And neither do most women throughout America. The subject reminds me of a study that was done some 20 years ago on the impact of spectator sports on family life. It suggested that they had a divisive effect because they took the man away from the family.

The Superbowl is the greatest symbol of spectator sports. It makes me think of men all across America glued to their sets and a lot of aggravated wives and girlfriends who are sick of the incessant background noise. My husband is intellectually aware of the inequities associated with big time sports, but at the same time he's a fan and loves to watch them so therefore we have them on a lot. It's a part of my life I feel aggressively hostile towards.

Stephanie Twin is the editor of Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport.

ROBERT LIPSYTE

IF YOU WANT to find social significance in the Superbowl, then you have to equate it with the Atlantic City Miss America Beauty Pageant. They're both exhibitions of beautiful young people who are very perishable, getting it off for the rest of us. The significance of the Superbowl is strictly commercial. It's one big cocktail party for corporate America. And if you think there's any kind of energy crisis, check out the amount of fuel that's going to be used by the private airplanes and the limousines, taking people back and forth from the game.

Robert Lipsyte is a sportswriter, novelist and screenwriter who is the author of Sportsworld, An American Dreamland.

SOL YURICK

SOME 50 OR 60 million people will be watching this event, but I will not be one of them. After all, I am not being paid to be one of the Zombs who watches the steroid-stuffed Trogs assault one another.

I envision, with the advent of modern

telecommunications and computers, a more interesting game. The players will be wired. Millions of spectators will have game-terminals that will, on the one hand, be connected to their central nervous system to send in plays to a central processor that will add up and average out the plays, and instruct the players in what to do next. Thus, through computers, the coach will be eliminated and life will be made interesting.

The shock of action will be transmitted back from the players to those who participate electronically so that the spectators will not only now be participants, but will feel the pain. Broken arms and knee-caps will be transmitted electronically and all will truly share in the ecstasy of victory and the agony of defeat. All this, of course, will increase medical bills and give a long needed shot to the economy as pain expands to and through the economy. But also cunning computer-cohorts of gamblers will now

be able to rig games as never before.

In the meantime, while the attention of millions is engaged in watching and participating in this event (the Zombs will still forget to ask to be paid for what they are undergoing), the oppressed underclasses will rise and rob them blind, thus creating a new way of recirculating capital into the most underdeveloped parts of the nation.

Remember: ask to be paid to watch.

Sol Yurick is the author of numerous novels and short stories.

ANITA DIAMANT

THINGS TO DO instead of watching the Superbowl: Bake bread, water the plants, write a letter to Judy, call my parents, run one mile with the dog, clean the bathroom, read the novel I've been meaning to finish for two weeks, invite Ellen over to listen to the new Stevie Wonder album, do last Sunday's crossword puzzle, walk to the corner and mail Darryl Stingley a get well card.

Anita Diamant is a writer for the Boston Phoenix and writes on sports for In These Times.

CHRISTOPHER LASCH

IN PROFESSIONAL sports today the dominant impulse is not so much to win as to avoid defeat. Athletic "pride," highly touted by sportswriters, can be translated as a desire to avoid embarrassment. The Superbowl, an overpublicized event in which nothing is at stake except "pride," gives added encouragement to the cautious, workmanlike approach to football that already prevails on most Sundays during the regular season.

These days most of the excitement in football is provided by the referees, whose unavoidably arbitrary and capricious decisions, subjected to the scrutiny of innumerable replays, have come to constitute almost a last refuge of spontaneity in organized athletics. When the referee is replaced by a computerized system of electronic surveillance, professional football will have reached its destined goal of absolute predictability and absolute boredom.

Christopher Lasch's most recent book is The Culture of Narcissism.

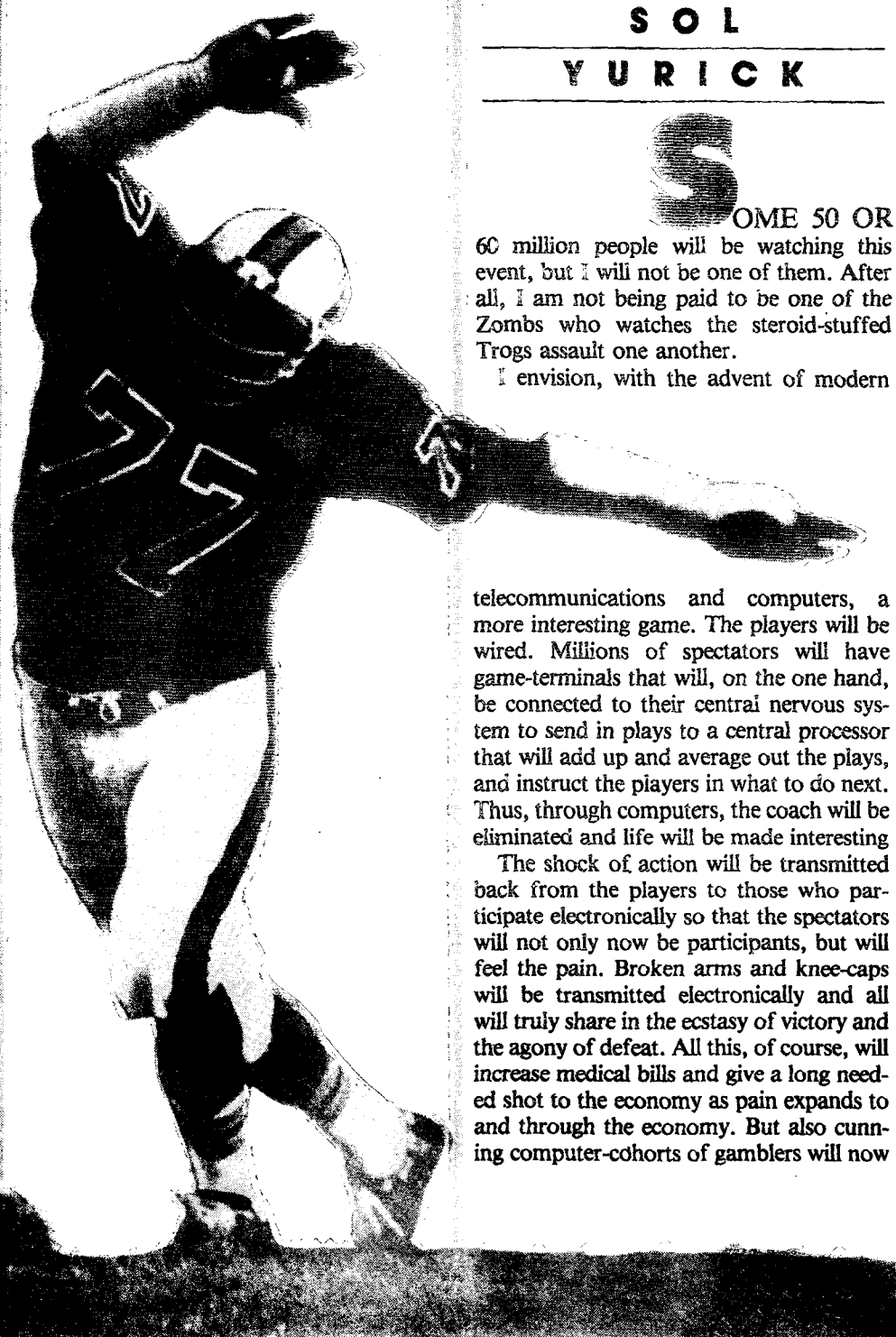
GEORGE SAUER JR.

THE SUPER-bowl is over-promoted and gaudy. For weeks before the game, television will be saturated with shows pontificating about its significance. The major TV networks function as advertising agencies, using the game to increase revenues from commercials.

I have a great deal of respect for the players and coaches. They are much better than they were 10 years ago—the athletes are more skilled and the coaching techniques are more sophisticated. But the rest of professional football seems just like a huge organization to promote itself.

Back in the '60s, when there was a lot more criticism of sports, the NFL at least had the imagination to make presentations emphasizing the human values of sports. I didn't agree with what they said, but at least they made the effort. Now, they've lost interest in trying to say anything about such questions. The Super Bowl and pro football generally have just become a great glittering circus act put on by people who just want to make money. If there's one word that reflects what I think it is, it's meretricious.

George Sauer Jr. was a split end on the 1968 New York Jets team that won the Superbowl.



LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

HONESTY

THE ONLY TIME I GET TIRED OF "THE Abortion issue" is when you print misrepresentations like those of Juli Loesch (*ITT*, Jan. 9) in which she tries to equate compulsory sterilization with free choice in abortion. (!)

I have yet to hear anyone advocating forced abortions for unwilling women, but anti-abortionists are constantly struggling to intimidate and hamper abortion patients, using verbal abuse and misinformation, physical harassments at clinics and even sometimes firebombings and death threats, and repeated legislative assaults on our Bill of Rights, such as the latest Missouri statute forcing doctors to advise all patients that the embryo is a "human being from the moment of conception," even though most physicians know perfectly well that the embryo is no more of a "human" than an acorn is a tree.

If Loesch truly abhors coercive practices, she is in the wrong camp. The goal of antichoice bigots is to coerce all unsilencing pregnant women, of whatever age, personal situation, economic status, and moral/religious convictions, to bring still more unwanted children into a cruelly overpopulated world, through a constitutional amendment. There are few objectives I can think of that are more unjust and barbaric.

As for all those "informed consent" statutes, they seem primarily designed to compel a detailed recital of all the risks and possible complications of abortion, while maintaining a discreet silence respecting the more considerable problems attending the only "alternative"—a full term pregnancy. Deceptive as usual.

We do not need "persistence" in reflecting as much as we need honesty and clearheadedness.

—Audrey Patton
—Moody, Mo.

TO THE GREATER ENJOYMENT OF MEN

I WAS PLEASED TO SEE KATE ELLIS' *Dialog* (*ITT*, Jan. 9). There was another offensive aspect of Judis' NARAL piece: his uncritical mention of the large financial contributions of Hugh Hefner's Playboy Foundation. The issue of misogyny and violence against women in popular culture generally, and pornography specifically, is of increasing concern to feminists and all leftists who understand the ideological power of the media to influence attitudes and behavior. Indeed, in the same week as the Abortion Rights Action mentioned by Ellis, another feminist event unreported by *ITT*. This was the anti-pornography march on Times Square. (Nor can *ITT* claim ignorance of this event, or the NYC Conference on Pornography in September. I myself sent in a piece on the subject.)

The question of *Playboy's* relationship to the "women's movement" is serious, as Hefner himself, who has taken to speaking as a "feminist" in his magazine and on network TV, well knows. The question of what a feminist view of sexuality is, is tricky, and needs serious debate. For Hefner, it means the "freedom" to express one's sexuality fully in the context of existing values and institutions. Thus, his support of the "pro-choice" movement, will on one limited level free women to be more sexually active, to the greater enjoyment and irres-

possibility of men. To feminists, however, it will mean a radical transformation of the entire culture and economy in ways which will mean the end of magazines like *Playboy*.

In refusing to acknowledge the political importance of these issues, *ITT* takes an objectively anti-feminist position which will have serious repercussions in the next decade, and, I expect, serve to alienate its many feminist readers who are already moving from impatience to anger at the sexual and cultural backwardness of your "majoritarian" politics.

—Hayne Rapping
—Pittsburgh

HERE'S ONE!

AS USUAL, I ENJOYED PAT AUFDERHEIDE's piece on American films in the '70s (*ITT*, Jan. 9). But she really blew it in one category: "Working Class Heroes (No Heroines)."

If *Norma Rae* didn't give us a working class heroine we'll never get one. Whether or not you liked the movie (I thought it was great), it's hard to deny that Sally Field's portrayal gave us a heroine. Pat completely overlooked this film in her article, yet we rarely get the opportunity to view such a high quality working class film as this one.

—Bob Grover
—Wooster, Ohio

Pat Aufderheide replies: Yes, I should have mentioned *Norma Rae*, for Sally Field's superb acting and not for a script that made *Norma Rae's* union organizing work secondary to her non-relationship with a holier-than-thou organizer.

DIRTY WORD?

JOHAN JUDIS' ARTICLE "THE RIGHT Wins the '70s," (*ITT*, Jan. 9) discusses reasons why the left was ineffective but does not mention one vital one, namely, the reduced utility and viability of the word "socialism" as a solution to our capitalist ills—resulting from the anti-socialist, anti-human rights, anti-democratic, imperialist actions of the two so-called socialist nations, the USSR and China.

At a time when the corporate liberal system is in a state of rapid decline, when democratic socialism and social planning should be the main order of business as an eventual response to the crisis, proposing socialist solutions falls on deaf ears. The word "socialist" produces immediate skepticism and ridicule with the finger pointing to the USSR or China or Eastern Europe and now South East Asia. I find it impossible to communicate with people, even those sympathetic to criticism of U.S. domestic or foreign policy.

And, among leftists and liberals, as well as former leftists, there is an air of pessimism and despair, now doubly reinforced with the latest moves by the USSR in Afghanistan. At times it seems the main obstacles to building a socialist movement come from the actions of the USSR, China, the Eastern European "democracies," Cuba, as well as some of the so-called socialist regimes of Africa and Asia. Similarly, these actions must have contributed to the losses on the left in Western Europe in the '70s.

This anti-socialist aura helps explain why the left has been almost completely

isolated and stymied in building a movement in the '70s. It raises questions that must be addressed—about democratic socialist strategies and approaches in the '80s for reaching the potentially receptive but skeptical audience that is there for building a movement which will be anti-monopoly, anti-war, anti-nuclear, pro-environment, and democratic. And certainly the times call for radical changes in the old sectarian left's policies, if that is possible.

—Donald Schoolman
—Ossining, N.Y.

Editor's note: We do not see this as the left's main problem. The left that fell on hard times in the '70s was not socialist or publicly identified as such. In fact, we have seen no public advocacy of programs of a socialist character on the major issues facing this country.

DISAPPOINTED

I WAS DISAPPOINTED IN YOUR ARTICLE "Another Nation Under God" (*ITT*, Dec. 12). I felt that its purpose was to wow people with statistics about this emerging Christian movement rather than to analyze its politics. Only in the last few paragraphs was the connection made between the new Christianity and reactionary political attitudes, and only once was its racism mentioned. Even so, there was no analysis of the relationship between reactionary attitudes and the belief system of evangelical Christians. (For example: a belief in supernatural control of human affairs coupled with belief in an afterlife promotes a conservative or laissez-faire attitude about social problems.)

My brother is a member of this movement and so are many of the people I work with (in a small, non-union electrical contractor's shop). They are all white, middle-class suburbanites. From living among these people I have learned that: 1) there are feuds and hostility within the evangelical Christian movement, 2) that there is some organized evangelical involvement in political campaigns, and 3) that many evangelical Christians hate labor unions.

—Anne Walker
—Seattle, Wash.

SERVING WHO?

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT YOUR feature articles on George Meany (*ITT*, Nov. 14, 1980) failed to note that his chosen heir, Lane Kirkland—as well as Sol Chaikin, whom you quote praising Kirkland—have both been members of the Trilateral Commission. Without that information, it may be more difficult for *ITT* readers to understand why Kirkland, apparently less "conservative" than Meany, has been friendlier to state-corporatist policies.

Last October, even before Meany had formally retired, Kirkland was already shifting course by arranging AFL-CIO participation in a government pay board. As the *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 3, 1979) here described it, "Kirkland broke off the year of guerrilla warfare with the Carter administration over its wage guidelines..." just as fellow Trilateralist Leonard Woodcock had been more amenable than Meany to remaining on Nixon's Pay Board in 1971.

So when we ask whether union officials are modern enough to keep up with the times (or to move the AFL-CIO in 'the right direction'), we need to ask whose class interests they are serving by doing so.

—Les Levidow
—London

PEOPLE FALLIBILITY

TWO POINTS WITH RESPECT TO JOHN Judis's side of the recent (*ITT*, Jan. 9) dialogue on abortion: First, the "group" on which Judis thinks I would have him confer "the mantle of infallibility." This "group consisted of all the

women who had written to the paper after its first abortion debate. They live in different parts of the country and were momentarily grouped together only by their concern with what was going on in the paper. Some signed collective letters and some of us know each other. But speaking for myself, infallibility (as in papal) is the last thing in the world I want conferred on me, by Judis or anyone else.

Second, I hate to think that saying a group is not on the left is tantamount to an attack, or even a negative characterization. There are political strategies that only a middle of the road organization can do. NARAL's electoral work is one of these (its postcards to legislators that say: I'm pro abortion and I vote, for instance). I totally support that. But a left organization is one that has left politics. It's difficult to define these usefully, but let's not say they don't exist.

—Kate Ellis
—New York City

TALK A LITTLE SOFTER, WORK A LITTLE HARDER

AS A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER who attended the recent American Public Health Association annual convention in New York City, I am reminded of George Bernard Shaw's comment that every profession is a conspiracy against the laity. Patrick Lacefield reports of lip service paid to progressive health issues at the convention. Effective action on these issues is often frustrated by the reticence of public health professionals to vigorously pursue these convictions once back home. This is a concern echoed by Dr. Benjamin Spock, who as the closing session speaker implored APHA members to do a little bit more, to be activists, to take risks.

As long as health workers and community health agencies are dependent on funding sources that support the dominant realities of free enterprise health care, local medical societies will continue to dominate local boards of health and many health agencies will continue to find more succor in the local medical establishment than with meaningful health care alternatives for the needy.

—Robert M. Goodman MPH
—Kalamazoo, Mich.

CALENDAR

January 24

Marxism and the Metropolis—seminar offered on 4 Thursday evenings beginning Jan. 24, 8-9:30. Sponsored by DSOC, Washington D.C. local, 6th floor conference room, 1346 Connecticut Ave., just south of Dupont Circle. Nominal fee. For details, call 296-7693.

January 29

Michael Harrington & Stanley Aronowitz debate, "Socialists in the 1980 Election." Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Columbia University Law School, 435 West 116th Street, New York City. Sponsored by NAM & DSOC.

February-May

Long-time anti-war activist, **Ital Roosenko**, will be on a speaking tour of the Southeast February through May. Topics on which Ital speaks include: Gandhian Nonviolence, Strategies for the Anti-Nuclear Movement, Pacifism and Nonviolence, Peace in the Middle East, and The War Resisters League: 56 Years of Nonviolent Action. For information on how to arrange a visit by Ital to your community, write WRL, 604 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701.

March 7

"The Political Economy of Poetry," a talk by Ron Silliman at the San Francisco Socialist School, 29 29th Street (off Mission), 8 p.m., \$2 or donation. Childcare available.

ROBERTA LYNCH

A new cold war will not solve our real problems

THE MOOD OF A NATION—especially one as diverse and complex as the United States—is always difficult to assess with anything approaching accuracy. Even if psychologists might seek to claim scientific qualities in their study of the individual, they quickly wander into the speculative when considering a country's psyche.

The current crisis in Iran has stirred up such a weird stew of gut-level emotions and media manipulation that is all the more problematic to gauge its impact on our collective consciousness.

To begin, there is the distinctly awkward posture of our leaders. On the one hand, they must appear sufficiently menacing to threaten the Iranians. And they must arouse sufficient anger among the American people to allow them to take any action deemed necessary.

This stance leads to the propagation of national chauvinism, militarism, and racism. And it fosters a rhetoric of "national honor" dangerously reminiscent of Germany in the wake of World War I.

On the other hand, even the more rabid militarists want to avoid stimulating the extremes of popular outrage that could force rash action upon them. They are not yet ready to risk the outbreak of World War III or even the political liability that the deaths of the hostages would surely be.

This concern prompts statements of moderation, reliance on "international law," and calls for "responsible action."

These contradictory messages from our leaders further complicated by their desire to avoid the issue of the shah's presence—have had even more contradictory reverberations among the American populace. Unlike the Vietnam situation of a decade ago, they do not produce anything like a clear division between "hawks" and "doves."

Instead, we find various amalgams of these views emerging as the dominant tenor these days. *Chicago Tribune* columnist Bob Greene offered one of the most extreme—and alarming—versions of this new consciousness.

"Our leaders are too wise and too compassionate—too strong—to do something foolish in the face of what is going on. But the world should know that, while our leaders show restraint and honor, there are many of us who muse on the thought of all Iran being erased from the earth in an instant and find comfort in that thought," Greene wrote.

Such outrageous sentiments are not limited to feature articles in major newspapers. If the experience of all the people I know who recently visited their families is any indication, "nuke Iran" outranked "pass the turkey" as dinner-table commentary at Thanksgiving this year.

What has happened to produce this mood? There is little argument that the taking of the hostages was an illegitimate act that few will sanction. And it is understandable that Americans would be angered by it.

It is less understandable why this anger is not tempered by a recognition of the role that the U.S. played in setting the stage for this crisis: both the immediate provocation of permitting the shah to enter the country as well as the long-standing animosity earned by U.S. support of his regime.

Most difficult to comprehend, however, is the tenacity of the response—the violent fantasies and the explo-



By increasing industrial and governmental bureaucracy, media domination, and penetration of personal life, while concomitantly folding up a variety of forms of public responsibility, our society has pushed people to withdraw more and more to defend their own little piece of turf. And it has left them feeling less and less potent in relation to events around them.

Inflation seems a force beyond our control, a mysterious sickness for which no one accepts blame or proffers cure. Crimes increase in number and viciousness. Young people seem lost in a haze of despair. The family structure is burdened far beyond its resources.

It has by now become a familiar litany. But what we have yet to figure out is the way in which the totality of these facts affects the way that each of us lives our lives and thinks about ourselves.

In the face of such a potent and mystifying array of social forces, it is difficult to imagine an individual response or forge a collective one. The sense of powerlessness thus becomes a private burden and one that is difficult to acknowledge—even to ourselves—because it would require seeing ourselves in opposition to the major forces in the society when they seem so pervasive and impregnable.

Is it any wonder, when viewed in this light, that Iran elicits the response that it does. The enemy can once more be outside our own society. And we can once more identify—however tenuously—with the powers within it. If we cannot return to the days when we as individuals felt some control over our lives, then we can return—however falsely—to the days when as a na-

tion we felt some control over our destiny. If we find it increasingly difficult to maintain our self-respect in a social system that constantly denigrates us, then we can resurrect an illusory sense of superiority by indulging in racist generalizations. If we have no means to respond to the injuries that are done to each of us daily, then we can shift our anger and humiliation to respond to the injury that is done us as a nation. The latter receives all manner of social legitimization; the former receives almost none.

It is not surprising, then, that Bob Greene concludes his diatribe by saying: "The Iranian crisis of 1979 may be the best thing that ever happened to us." Like the ayatollah Khomeini who is using the issue of the shah to distract his people's attention from their internal problems, so our pundits clearly hope to use the issue of the hostage-taking to divert us from the realities of our lives. Jimmy Carter is banking on the Iranian situation to be his ticket to four more years in the White House, despite his abysmal record on domestic issues.

It is a futile, but nonetheless frightening, endeavor. The danger of resurgent militarism is becoming increasingly acute and will require strong opposition. But no matter how much Greene and others like him may dream of a new American age, there is no way permanently to obscure the problems that beset us daily in this country. And when the embassy crisis has passed into history, it is these that will re-emerge as the basic determinants of our common future.

Roberta Lynch is a member of the New American Movement, a democratic socialist organization. ©In These Times.

The Corporate Giants have us in their clutches.

And as little people we haven't had the power to fight back effectively.

The Giants are too big.

Corporate ripoffs cost the public over \$200 billion a year, a Senate subcommittee estimates. Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce admits that every year American firms commit crimes in their Suites totalling \$40 billion. Investigations have uncovered union-busting efforts, increasing hazards on the job, inadequate toxic waste disposal and additional air and water pollution.

To protest these abuses we have named April 17, 1980 national **Big Business Day**.

Join the growing coalition of labor, church, consumer, women's, minority and environmental groups in turning around our country in the 80's. Join us in discussing the alternatives—

- consumer co-ops
- credit unions
- small businesses
- Corporate Democracy Act of 1980.

Help us organize teach-ins, film festivals, demonstrations and other activities in your area. Help us make April 17, 1980 the end to Business As Usual.

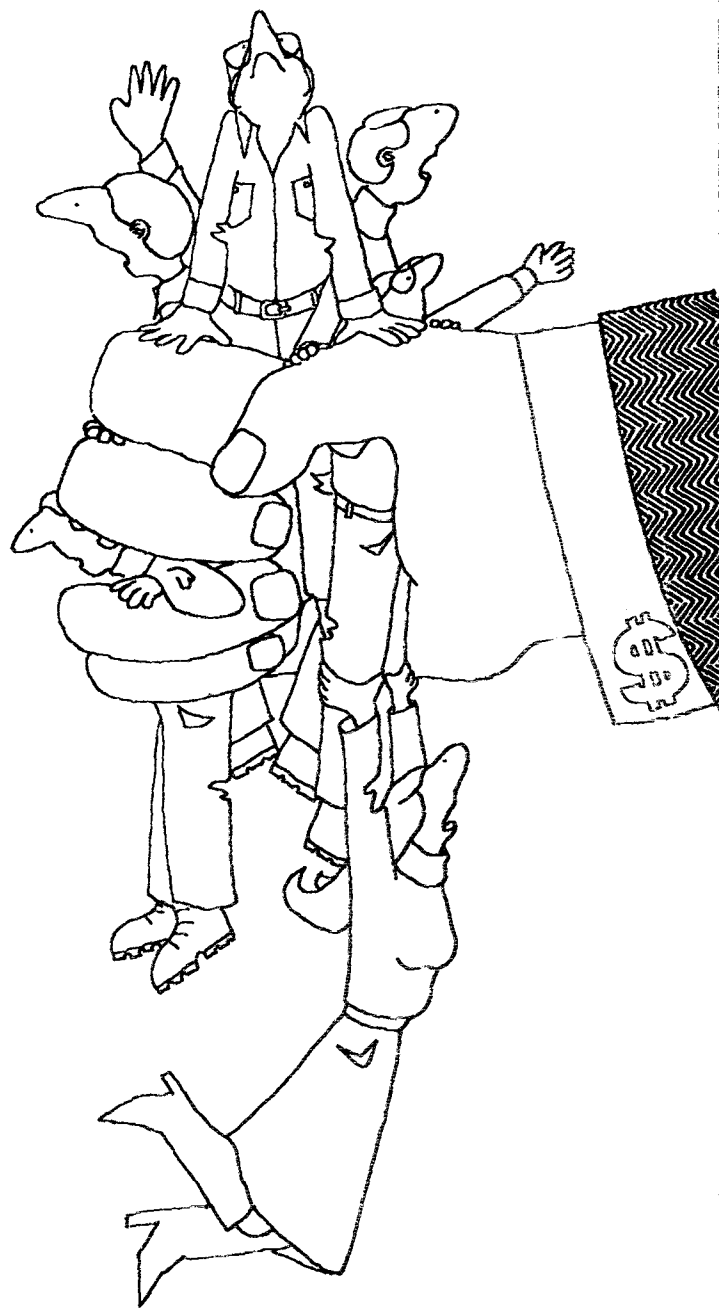
Big Business Day
1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Room 411
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 861 0456

Yes, I want to help fight Crime in the Suites.
☐ Let me know how I can participate in Big Business Day.
☐ I want to be a local coordinator.
☐ Here's my check for _____ to make Big Business Day a success.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



BIG BUSINESS DAY April 17, 1980

Among the initiators of Big Business Day are: RALPH NADER (Consumer advocate), JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH (Prof. Emeritus, Harvard University), WILLIAM H. WYNN (Pres., United Food and Commercial Workers), DOUGLAS A. FRASER (Pres., United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America), PATSY J. MINK (Pres., Americans for Democratic Action), JAMES FARMER (Exec. Dir., Coalition of American Public Employees), ED ASNER (Actor), CAESAR CHAVEZ (Pres., United Farm Workers of America), BISHOP THOMAS GUMBLETON (Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Detroit), JOYCE MILLER (Pres., Coalition of Labor Union Women), ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR. (Alban Schweitzer Prof. of Humanities, City University of New York), RABBI MARC TANENBAUM (American Jewish Committee), WILLIAM W. WINPISINGER (Int'l. Pres., International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers), JERRY WILBY (Pres., American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees).
Institutional affiliation for identification purposes only.

IN DEPTH

The Soviets' invasion follows double failures

By Louis Menashe

UNDER COVER OF DISINGENUOUS SHOCK IN THE FACE OF the Soviet action, the Carter administration can at last shelve detente, a policy with which it has always been uncomfortable. In this election year, the humiliating events in Iran may now be offset by reviving an old standby in U.S. foreign policy, acting tough toward the Russians. On the Soviet side, the intervention seems to have been as much conditioned by events in Afghanistan as by Moscow's perception of the deterioration of detente, although that was an important ingredient. The policy of great power cooperation and accommodation along a broad economic, military, and cultural front began to run into rough weather early in the Carter presidency. Carter chose as his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Soviet-affairs specialist with pronounced anti-Moscow feelings, who recommended exacting a greater price from the Russians for detente. In an abrupt departure from the Nixon-Kissinger ground rules, the new administration angered the Soviet leadership by publicly extending a hand to Russian dissidents on behalf of human rights. The gesture only stiffened Moscow's position and didn't help the dissidents much.

Other disappointments to the Russians followed. Export licenses for key technology were denied. Most-favored nation treatment for Russian exports was withheld, even as Moscow eased barriers to Jewish emigration. China-U.S. relations warmed up. There was a big fuss over a 17 year old Soviet "combat brigade" in Cuba. Senate SALT ratification languished while Carter became the first president in peacetime to up the Pentagon budget during the post-World War II era for three consecutive years. Plans went ahead for developing the MX heavy mobile missile. Most recently, Washington has decided, with allied approval, to re-equip NATO with a new generation of nuclear missiles capable of reaching Soviet territory from Western Europe.

"What we see," a Soviet analyst told *Newsweek*, "is a frontal hardening of the U.S. position in all spheres of buildup—strategic weapons, theater weapons, conventional forces, quick reaction forces. If you show such hardening, what do you expect from us?"

The Russians probably felt, given this record, there was little to lose where detente was concerned by going into Afghanistan.

Many commentators have emphasized that the invasion marks the first time since

World War II that Soviet combat forces have been involved outside Eastern Europe. It is something of a milestone, but not altogether so dramatic. For Moscow, Afghanistan is not exactly on the other side of the moon. It shares a common border with the USSR, its ethnic minorities—Turkomens, Tadzhiks, Uzbeks, and Kirghiz—are closely related to the populations of Soviet Central Asia, and ever since the 1950s the Soviets have extended military and economic assistance, capped by a \$1 billion development package after the April 1978 coup unseated the Daud regime.

There is no evidence that the Soviets engineered that coup, but there is no denying Moscow's direct influence and stakes in Afghanistan thereafter. Talk of Moscow's "historic drive" southwards to the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean may be dismissed as the fancies of armchair strategists, a Victorian armchair at that. Similarly, there is no evidence supporting another hypothesis, that Moscow is concerned that Islamic fundamentalism might cross borders and subvert the Moslem population under Soviet rule.

Official statements from TASS, *Pravda*, and *Izvestia* justify the intervention as countering imperialist meddling assisted by the Chinese, Egyptians and Saudis, and based in Pakistan. Most recently, Brezhnev spoke of the threat that Afghanistan might "be turned into an imperialist military bridgehead on our country's southern border." No doubt some of this is true, but the nub of the problem was that the Moscow-backed Kabul government faced a serious rebellion in the countryside brought on by rapid and coercive reforms.

That Afghanistan needed reforms is beyond argument. It is a country of vast illiteracy, short life expectancy, landless peasants, no railroads, absentee landlords, and the feudal subjugation of women. The Soviet model of secular modernization in a Moslem land, applied successful-

ly in Central Asia, was not working in Afghanistan, in part because of the ferocity of the Amin regime. In a move designed not to let matters get totally out of hand, and in the style of Stalinist and Afghan political practices, Amin was summarily removed and executed as an imperialist agent, and Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan in force—estimates run to 85,000 as of this writing.

Does this mean an end to detente? Unquestionably, the international climate is the worst in years. Washington is reluctant to grant the Soviets the great power status they crave, to recognize, as *Pravda* puts it, that "the balance of forces in the world has changed...substantially." Not to put too fine a point on it, Moscow is implying that its right to protect its interests and obligations, even if it means military intervention, has to be respected as part of the detente arrangement.

No U.S. administration can possibly afford to be so generous in an age of diminished American global power and prestige. Add to this the Soviet propensity to back with arms established Marxist-oriented regimes in the Third World, as in Ethiopia, Angola, and Southern Yemen, and the prospects for detente become very cloudy indeed.

On the other hand, if the Soviet reputation for caution and prudent calculation is accurate, we may assume the situation in Afghanistan will stabilize in relatively short order. If the Soviets did not anticipate this, they would probably not have intervened in the first place. If that is the case, then Afghanistan, like Hungary and Czechoslovakia, will recede as another episode in the new "Great Game" of the major powers.

But not before the 1980 elections. In the short run, and old conflict in Washington, the debate between what the Soviets used to call the "sober circles," (Vance and the State Department) and the "hot-heads" (Brzezinski and the Pentagon) will revive.

The Soviet intervention resonates differently in different quarters. For the left, it is filled with ambiguities. Only a very broad definition of national liberation movement can encompass the Afghan rebels, no matter how often they are pictured with the Kalashnikov assault rifles. Freeing the country of outside influence is only one of several motives animating the rebels, which include tribal as well as Islamic fundamentalism, hostility to any centralized government in Kabul, and ordinary banditry.

Unlike U.S. interventions, the Soviet action is not a move on behalf of a tyranny aiming to preserve the status quo and the profits of international capital. It is not even like previous Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe, where reform socialist regimes were crushed because they deviated from the Soviet mode. Whatever we may think of the use of force, the Soviet move is designed to protect a progressive Afghan political front against internal reaction.

Clearly, the Soviet intervention violates accepted canons of international relations, particularly where great powers and the Third World are concerned. (That Third World countries have double standards of their own is shown by Tanzania, which had no compunctions about invading Uganda to end the Idi Amin regime, voting the deplore the Soviet action in the UN.)

But force of another kind is also at issue, the force that seems to be required to lift Third World populations out of primordial economic and social misery. Breaking the chains of feudalism and imperialism comes at great cost—single-party-state regimes, political authoritarianism and ideological conformity, backed by security apparatuses and, if necessary, Soviet troops. The choice seems to be, let's face it, between the shah and Babrak Kernal.

Louis Menashe teaches Russian history at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.

United Nations

Continued from page 3.

Soviet Union," said Nigeria's ambassador B. Akporode Clark, referring in particular to Soviet support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa. But, said Clark, Nigeria had felt "a great sense of disappointment" at the Soviet action. Not one to "subscribe to double standards," Clark said that Nigeria "would always condemn without any reservation armed interference in the internal affairs of states."

India's vote.

India's position was also important. India had been expected to support the Soviet action, and indeed India's ambassador, Brajesh Mishra, declared during the debate that New Delhi had "no reason to doubt" Soviet assurances that its troops would be withdrawn eventually from Afghanistan. Mishra saved his most critical words for the West. Declining to identify the U.S. by name, Mishra did make it clear that New Delhi was worried about

the U.S. military buildup in the Indian Ocean. "Building bases, pumping arms to small and medium countries, and interfering in the internal affairs of nations with a view to isolating and dividing non-aligned countries poses a threat even to our own security," Mishra said.

Still, when the vote was taken, India abstained, which surprised many observers. It was a clear signal to both Moscow and Washington that Indira Gandhi should not be taken for granted by either superpower.

In the end, though, the single most important fact about the U.N. debate on Afghanistan was that Third World nations overwhelmingly opposed the Soviet intervention. Of the 104 votes calling, in effect, for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, 67 came from nonaligned nations. That's almost two-thirds of the 92-nation movement and a clear indication that despite the general wisdom that the nonaligned nations always end up on the Soviet side of controversial issues, the movement is capable of independence.

But what effect will the U.N. vote actually have? The Security Council has been stymied from taking any action by the Soviet veto and the General Assembly has no power to carry out its resolution. What's the point?

The force of the assembly is primarily moral and no delegate here actually believes that as a result of last week's vote Soviet troops will leave Afghanistan any sooner. Yet the vote will have an impact. Everyone was surprised by the margin of victory and it will probably be that fact alone that will carry the greatest weight.

Silence can be at times the most eloquent voice. Soviet ambassador Proyanovsky had been unusually vociferous throughout the week preceding the vote, speaking off the cuff with reporters in the U.N. corridors. After the vote, though, the Soviet ambassador quickly slipped out of U.N. headquarters. He had nothing to say.

Michael Shuster is a United Nations correspondent for *Pacifica Radio*.



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»SPORTSCENE«

WINTER OLYMPICS

The big bobsled to bankruptcy

By Rick Ridder

Do you remember the financial fiasco of the Montreal Olympics, known in some circles as Drapeau's Folly? There were cost overruns, unfinished construction (they still have not domed the stadium scheduled for completion in 1975), union strikes, increased taxes on cigarettes until the year 2000 and the near bankruptcy of the city.

Now, from the folks who brought you Montreal 1976 comes Lake Placid 1980.

If current independent projections are correct the cost of the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics will be \$100 million—six times the original estimate. This colossal overrun is for an Olympics billed as "the Olympics in perspective."

It seemed like such a good idea to hold the Olympics in Lake Placid. The International Olympic Committee and the Lake Placid Olympic Committee hoped that by staging the Olympics in this small village in upstate New York the games would be transformed from the billion dollar extravaganzas of Sapporo, Japan, in 1972 and Grenoble, France, in 1968 into an "up close and personal affair."

By using existing facilities built for the 1932 Olympics held in Lake Placid the cost would be only \$35 million—\$20 million for additional construction and renovation and \$15 million for administrative cost. It was to be the Olympic version of "small and beautiful."

But the planners and budgeters were all wrong. The town of 2,000, with archaic and insufficient facilities, poor roads, limited housing and a budget of \$35 million should never have been selected as an Olympic site. To hold a modern Olympics an area must be able to handle 2,000 athletes and coaches, 3,000 media personnel with all their trappings and 55,000 visitors a day. It also requires 900 police—more police than there were athletes in 1932.

Budgets were regularly discarded and revised over the last four years. The old ice arena, for instance, was renovated for a cool \$2.5 million. The new ice arena slipped in with a bill of \$16 million. (The new ice arena provides two more ice rinks and 10,000 more seats for paying spectators to make the Olympics a paying proposition.) The huge course—for the sledding sport performed largely by East Europeans—cost \$5.7 million.

Where are the folks in Lake Placid going to get \$200 million—close to \$100,000 per resident? There is no simple answer, but in a San Clemente redux the American taxpayer will shoulder a large portion of the burden.

Prison.

The construction costs of \$105 million are covered by federal and state tax funds. The federal contribution is \$70 million. Of that, \$22 million is taken from the budget of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Prisons. The Olympic Village will become a minimum security prison at the conclusion of the games. This plan has met with opposition from the Mohawks, who claim that the prison is situated on their aboriginal homeland; from a national coalition of religious, church and prison reform groups called Stop the Olympic Prison (STOP); and from international coaches who say they find it demeaning to house the world's top athletes in a jail. Just imagine the uproar if the Soviets had planned to do the same at Moscow this summer.

Some international coaches who are

Lake Placid's "intimate" Olympics will cost six times the original estimate, and the party's on us.

less diplomatic and more pragmatic have pulled their teams out of the Village and into other housing facilities. The Austrian team is reported to have bought an entire motel for \$140,000 to assure comfortable living space.

There is some justification for the Austrian and other nations' complaints. The furnishings are sparse at best. As one foreign official put it, "The Americans are very good at what they do. It looks like a prison, it's constructed like a prison and it even smells like a prison. It is not an Olympic Village for world-class athletes."

Local jobs.

\$56 million is derived from the budget of the Department of Commerce's economic development administration for the building of the Olympic facilities. The justification for such a large grant to such a small community was that these monies would reduce Lake Placid's chronically high unemployment and bring economic stability to the community.

But the construction contractors employed union workers who did not live in the Lake Placid area. Many commuted as much as 90 miles a day to the job site, and Lake Placid's unemployment figure remains above 10 percent.

The remaining \$2 million in federal funds comes from that old standby, the Department of Defense. If there is no war in progress, a civilian simulation will do. To that end crowd control and communications will be handled by the boys in green. With 55,000 visitors a day feeding into a town where there are few restaurants, fewer bars, scarce tickets and housing going for \$15,000 for a four bedroom home, the Army will have won its war if it prevents a festival-seating rampage in Lake Placid.

New York state residents contributed an additional \$35 million to the construction costs.

With \$105 million of public construction funds, one would surmise that these are the best and safest sports facilities to grace rural America. They certainly are the best, in the cases of the luge and bobsled facilities, because they are the only such facilities. But the safety of the facilities is debatable. Last spring two structural engineers charged that the new \$16 million ice arena has faulty wells and that there was a one in 10 chance that the roof of the arena would partially collapse.

The general contractors, Gilbane Building Company of Providence, R.I., denied the charges as did the Economic Development Administration. Gilbane, however, has a pedigree in collapsing roofs, helping build the ill-fated Hartford Civic Center.

The \$47 million in administrative expenses will not come from public coffers, but from a variety of private sources. ABC television paid \$15 million for TV



Poster designed by Hjortzberger for the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm.

rights to the game. Different corporations gave contributions in the form of sponsorship and supplies, providing close to \$20 million. Ticket sales, individual contributions and vendor license fees will add the remaining \$12 million.

Clean up.

The clean up costs will be massive and nowhere are they budgeted. Moreover, the state's contribution of \$35 million is a direct contribution towards construction, which does not include administrative costs such as increased tax collections, administrative salaries, overhead expenses and public property rehabilitation. Some independent analysts say unfunded expenses will exceed \$40 million.

The Carter administration as well as New York state have announced that they will not support increased public funds for the games.

The local Lake Placid population is loathe to support local funding of the deficit. The Olympics were approved by the locals dependent on the assurance that local taxes would not be raised to finance the games. Indeed, the taxes that pay for the Olympics are a sore subject among local long time residents of Lake Placid. It took Lake Placid residents 30 years to pay off the debt incurred during the 1932 Olympics.

Rick Ridder is an independent radio producer.

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By Al Auster

Late December and all of January are traditionally a time of the doldrums in TV. Since the number of viewers is down especially at Christmas, and it's just before the February sweeps the networks generally fill up their schedules with public affairs specials and other serious fare beloved by F.C.C. commissioners. As a result we've had a few informative documentaries (CBS did one recently on the decade, a two parter called *American Dream/American Nightmare*, NBC did a white paper on the Presidency, and ABC got in there with *Closeup: Infinite Horizons—Space Beyond Apollo*), and some interesting TV movies.

Suddenly injected into this season's abundance of TV tales about teenage hitchhikers, haunted houses, obscene phone-callers, and someone licking leukemia, transcending cancer, and convulsive seizures are a couple of TV movies that tackle social issues. For instance, *OHMS*, a movie starring Ralph Waite (*The Waltons*) and David Birney, with bows to both *The China Syndrome* and Frank Capra dealt with the efforts of a group of small farmers in upstate New York to resist a huge power company's attempt to construct high voltage lines over their farms. The movie came complete with reminders of Vietnam-like helicopters, herbicides, and a former Vietnam protester (Birney), who helped organize and lead the farmers to victory.

Another interesting upcoming TV movie, this one highly touted by NOW, is *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream*, starring Linda Lavin (*Alice*) on Saturday, Jan. 26. *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream* is about a divorced working mother who tries to get and keep a job on the previously all male assembly line of an engine plant because she

ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

TELEVISION

Being the first woman on the assembly line



Lavin's foreman (Richard Jaeckel) wants her to get no favors.

desperately needs the extra \$.90 an hour it pays.

Problems.

On one level *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream* is a welcome relief from beer commercial images of the working class filled with scenes of all sorts of unalienated happiness and camaraderie. The assembly line at the engine plant in the southern border town where Ellen Lissik (Linda Lavin) works is a place where the men and women hardly like each other, much less their work, the bosses or their union, and where racial epithets

are barely a slip of the tongue away.

In addition, Ellen has problems that would make your average sitcom mother or father wince. For instance, there's her daughter Kim (Dana Hill) who is too old to play with dolls and too young for a bra, a beau (Mayf Nutter) who seems to think that the best place for a woman is the back seat of his sports car, and a feckless-penniless ex-husband (Nicholas Pryor), who sweats profusely at the mere mention of child support. Compounding all this are her male assembly line co-workers, who can't decide

We can see social issue films and public affairs during the doldrums between sweeps.

whether they're good ole boys or Peck's bad boys.

Lavin wends her way through all of this with a low keyed tenacity. There's none of the "Kiss mah grits" spunkiness of "Alice" in this role. As a matter of fact one of her best scenes in the movie is a moment of hopelessness when she inadvertently blurts out "there must be a law," and gets the job on the line from the befuddled personnel officer who had just turned her down. Also excellent in a supporting role is Nicholas Pryor as her actor ex-husband who, it seems, will never be better

than as a second rate performer in third rate shows.

Unfortunately, *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream* has a tendency to mar these rather good moments with the melodramatic cliché. For example, the fraternity type hazing that Ellen takes from her male co-workers takes a vicious turn when one of them convinces an obvious mental defective worker that Ellen wants to make love to him. What follows is an abortive "Of Mice and Men" sexual molestation. Needless to say women working on the assembly line have a hard enough time without also having to deal with old Hollywood conventions.

However, the major problem with *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream* is that it thinks small. An obvious comparison to it is the movie *Norma Rae* (indeed Lavin is married to *Norma Rae* co-star Ron Liebman). In that film Norma Rae not only fought for her own dignity, but there was a collective victory of the union as well.

Although *The \$5.20 an Hour Dream* pays obeisance to the idea of other women taking jobs on the assembly line (a final scene even has a Norma Rae look alike asking Ellen if there are any openings on the line) most of the other women in the movie seem to abhor the idea of working with men on the line. The only one to give Ellen any support is her pregnant friend Ginny (Pamela McMyler). Ninety cents an hour, however, is important to a lot of women and not just your maverick's struggle. And this TV movie never gives a sense of any collective need or struggle.

The \$5.20 an Hour Dream is a sincere and earnest TV movie that even manages to get in a nice plea for the ERA. TV will begin to make more of these someday, not just in the times between its peak audience periods. However, let's hope the next time the little screen thinks a little bigger.

Al Auster is a New York historian and cultural critic.

POPULAR MUSIC

By Bruce Dancis

On Dec. 6, 1976, Bob Marley was wounded during an assassination attempt in Kingston, Jamaica, shortly before he was to appear at a concert backing the candidacy of Prime Minister Michael Manley. Marley subsequently left Jamaica and told the British rock paper *Melody Maker* that he would no longer be involved in what he called "commercial politics," which had become "too heavy."

Marley's exile coincided with a clear deterioration in his music. Both *Exodus* and *Kaya*, Marley and the Wailers' two subsequent albums, lacked the compelling drive and moving social commentary that saturated his earlier work. In fact, on *Kaya* Marley fell to re-recording several songs from his Jamaican albums of the early 1970s; all paled in comparison with the originals.

The change in Marley was all the more significant because Mar-

Marley sings for black unity with renewed faith, energy

ley was and is more than just a talented musician—he is the Dylan, Beatles, and Rolling Stones of reggae, the person most responsible for spreading reggae's Rastafarian, anti-colonialist message throughout the world, and one of the most gifted songwriters of his generation.

After wandering in the wilderness for two years, Marley returned to Jamaica and his roots. His new album, *Survival* (Island Records), reflects Marley and the Wailers' simultaneous return to both musical brilliance and militant resistance to racial and economic oppression as well as a reaffirmation of his faith. The magnitude of his achievement might best be expressed through an analogy: it's as if after releasing the disappointing *Let It Be*, the Beatles had regrouped, reinvigorated themselves, turned off their legal squabbles and turned out another *Rubber Soul*.

Marley returned to Jamaica after two years' exile from "commercial politics" following a murder attempt.

Survival initially shows its colors in an album cover made up of the flags of the independent African nations and a drawing of a slave ship's storage during the brutal Atlantic crossing. The title captures the album's theme—the need for black unity in the face of attempts to create divisiveness.

Commitment. "Zimbabwe" and "Africa Unite" both reflect Marley's longtime support for African liberation movements, a commitment that was apparently reaffirmed by Marley's recent (first) trip to Africa. And he doesn't shrink from supporting revolutionary violence when it is the only alternative.

Talking with British journalist Vivien Goldman, Marley said, "I expect if you're living by the gun, if gun is the fight, then FIRE gun. If where you come from, you fight with sticks and stones, then fight with sticks and stones. If the fight is spiritual, then fight spiritual, because everywhere the fight goes on. We don't have any alternatives."

While Marley calls repeatedly for people to take action, he also recognizes that the struggle will be long and hard—"There's work to be done/So let's do it little by little," he sings on "Wake Up and Live."

Survival also shows that Marley retains his analytical power. One of the album's best songs is "Ambush," perhaps Marley's strongest statement about colonialism: "See them fighting for power/But they know not the hour/So they bribing/With their guns, spare-parts and money/Trying to belittle our integrity/They say what we know/Is just what they teach us..."

Marley's renewed militancy is only one part of *Survival's* triumph. The disappointingly laid-back arrangements and dispirited vocals on *Kaya* have been replaced by a dynamism that puts the edge back into Marley's songs, which as usual receive sterling instrumental support from the Wailers, in particular drummer Carlton Barrett and bassist Aston "Familyman" Barrett.



From the gently rocking, joyful "One Drop" to "Ride Natty Ride's" exquisite chorus by the I Three's (three women who regularly sing backup with Marley) to the haunting charge of "Ambush," Marley has created an album without weak links.

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I LOVE MYSELF WHEN I AM LAUGHING...AND THEN AGAIN WHEN I AM LOOKING MEAN AND IMPRESSIVE: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader.

Edited by Alice Walker and with an introduction by Mary Helen Washington
The Feminist Press, \$6.95.

By Barbara Wilson

It has become a truism of the women's movement that if we want to know much about the women who came before us, then we've got to search them out and bring them back to life ourselves.

This book is especially important because it focuses on the life and work of a black woman writer, Zora Neale Hurston, until recently consigned to a few disparaging footnotes in the history of the Harlem Renaissance. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, perhaps her finest novel, was reprinted in 1978 and a biography by Robert Hemenway came out in 1977, but this is the first time a representative selection of Hurston's varied output (fiction, essays, autobiography and folklore) has been gathered together in one volume.

Throughout we sense the guiding hand of editor Alice Walker the poet and novelist, making us see what Zora Neale Hurston meant to her as a black woman and writer, and what Hurston means to all of us. Hurston stirred up as much controversy in her lifetime as she no

doubt will in ours. She was not a "good girl"—she couldn't have been the writer she was if she had been. Walker, and Mary Helen Washington in her introduction, make no apology for that. Rather, they transmit their vision of her strength and courage to us.

How else than being sassy and forward could Zora Neale Hurston have moved from the poverty of a rural town in Florida to Barnard College? How else than being as resilient as a diving board could Hurston have become a noted folklorist, a prolific writer, the recipient of two Guggenheims and a major shaper of the Harlem Renaissance in the '20s?

Hurston was born about 1901 in the all black town of Eatonville, Florida. It was the first incorporated "all-Negro" town in the South, a fact of no small importance to Hurston in later life, when she was accused of writing "minstrel shows." Hurston's first experience of black life was not of racial conflict and discrimination, but of a self-sufficient, integral community.

As she wrote in a 1928 essay, "How It Feels To Be Colored Me," "I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it." Such an attitude led her to minimize the very real pain and powerlessness of being black; it also led her to explore, in her fiction and folklore, the strong and positive heritage of her people.



Zora Neale Hurston sought and found

Her books express as no other literature of the time did the humor, richness and variety of her experience of black culture. Her fate, as Mary Helen Washington puts it in the introduction, was to be writing primarily in the '30s, when the first wave of the celebratory Harlem Renaissance had passed and the black protest writer was beginning to set down his or her experience of discrimination.

Often dismissed as superficial and "unserious," Hurston can today be read with more perspective. The best of her novels,

Their Eyes Were Watching God and *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, and her fine work of folklore reportage, *Mules and Men*, are filled with strong characters and memorable, lively dialogue. The language is at times pure delight, so pithy and real is it, incorporating the wonderful metaphorical power of black language: "Ah done been in sorrow's kitchen and ah licked the pots clean;" "Anyone whose mouth is cut crossways can lie." One could quote whole pages where the dialogue races along, combining the "lying tales"

commonly told on the General Store's front porch with advice, stray wisdom and exactly phrased summaries of rivalries and differences. Nor is her literary skill confined to dialogue; Hurston can set a scene to make your blood run cold. The description of the flood in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* almost Biblically evokes a sense of elemental human fear before the forces of nature.

Women with spunk.

Hurston was no feminist, and at least one of the stories in the reader, "The Gilded Six-Bits" is almost sexist in its conception of the erring wife and her husband's forgiveness. But more often Hurston gives her female characters just as much spunk as her males. Another story, "Sweat," shows a woman who stands up to her husband in spite of repeated threats and beatings.

No discussion of *I Love Myself When I'm Laughing* would be complete without reference to Alice Walker's moving afterward, "Looking For Zora." Walker describes visiting Eatonville and meeting the people who knew Hurston, finding her unmarked grave and buying a headstone that will read: "Zora Neale Hurston/ 'A Genius of the South'/ Novelist Folklorist Anthropologist/ 1901-1960."

One can't help but cheer at the knowledge that one more woman has been reclaimed. ■ Barbara Wilson is a Seattle fiction writer and journalist.

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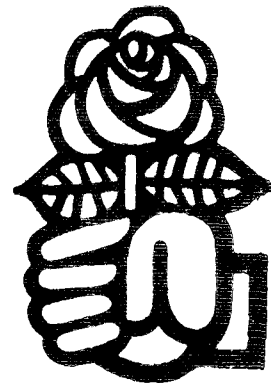
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By Pat Aufderheide

Afflicted as we are these days with gigantesque hardware and slapstick movies—the Celluloid Hollow Men, we can be incredibly grateful for common human decency and ordinary affection. The midlife romance of *An Unmarried Woman*, the loving homosexual marriage of *La Cage aux Folles*, the endearing neuroses of *Manhattan*—they're all fashionably affectionate. Old fashioned sentiment is dressed up in ultramodern arrangements, but it's still the same stuff.

Kramer vs. Kramer is the latest "little film" to be fashionable. Appearing just before the end of the year, it became an urban word-of-mouth hit. It flew to the top-10 lists of the New York daily paper critics, and even got on the U.S. Catholic Conference's top 10.

Kramer vs. Kramer is a love story between a boy and his father. When Joanna (Meryl Streep) walks out of their New York apartment after eight years of increasingly desperate housewifedom, Ted (Dustin Hoffman) takes over fulltime care of Billy (Justin Henry) while holding on to his Madison Avenue job. He more or less succeeds, only to have Joanna return and demand custody. After a typically dirty-pool, everybody-loses day in court, she gets the boy but nobly gives up her claim.

At least part of *Kramer vs. Kramer*'s whirlwind appeal comes from its subject. It lovingly represents a crisis—divorce and custody—that many people in the baby-boom consumer group are suffering. Here divorce and custody are the terrible problems of fundamentally decent people.

Like its art-circuit companions in film fashion, *Kramer vs. Kramer* provides old (and hardy) sentiment in new furnishings. It makes problems of married love chic, posing them as new ones. It appeals to a group of people far larger than the New York middle class it represents, who have abandoned—or, better, been abandoned by—traditions of domesticity.

Well, this is a narcissistic age, our social critics tell us. One of the covert problems of the era is the establishing of personal identity in a socio-economic machine that seems to eat traditions and social connections for breakfast. So a film like *Kramer vs. Kramer*, in which we see how people live at home, how they handle crisis, how they express love, has a shock-of-recognition value.

The movie is quietly expert in showing us ordinary daily life with new eyes. The short, tailored scenes, written by director Robert Benton (who also directed *The Late Show*) from Avery Corman's novel, end crisply. Later scenes then neatly echo them. For instance when Joanna leaves, Ted tries to make French toast, but he makes a mess of it. Mid-film we watch Billy and Ted in a silent breakfast of donuts

*I love
my wife,
but Oh,
you
kid!*



KRAMER VS. KRAMER

and orange juice. Finally at movie's end we watch them efficiently make French toast together. Get it?

Nestor Almendros' cinematography elegantly complements the script style, staying close to the characters and their apartment-cramped life, cleanly entering and exiting, pausing judiciously to let us examine objects that define taste and to make a point. Dustin Hoffman creates, with Henry, a believable, growing father-son love. His superb acting is matched by all the principals.

It's astonishing to see the quiet heroics of childraising and growing up so accurately portrayed.

Goodbye, Mommy.

But *Kramer vs. Kramer*'s reputation isn't all love and kisses. Part of the reason the film is talked about so much is that we finally got a warm commercial film about being a single mother—and it's about a father.

Indeed this movie, somewhat in spite of itself, leans on a common fantasy to steer the plot. If the men could just make families without the women...

A film meticulous in its detail of New York middle class lifestyles, a film that tells you about its main characters' morning bathroom rituals, tells you almost nothing about the wife, who motivates most of the action. She leaves (perhaps we should imagine scenes from, say, *Diary of a Mad Housewife* or *Up the Sandbox* to understand why she left?). She comes back (What happened to her in California? Is she maybe a convert to something?). She sues for custody

(Would she be a good mother? Why doesn't she negotiate?). Finally she abandons her claim (Is she flighty? Or has she Done the Right Thing?).

When the script so slights Joanna, it also slights Ted's and Billy's relationship with her and leaves out information that conditions how Ted and Billy grow together. Without that part of the family system, the love between father and son can cheaply devolve into the familiar story of two buddies managing the world on their own, on a holiday from the women.

Not that they escape woman-ordered civilization in this film without penalties. In fact some of the best scenes in the film show how the sexually-segregated work world runs on free housework and child care. And we watch the way in which the two men take on the aspects of the absent woman. As Billy toddles in with morning orange juice he becomes a kind of surrogate wife, sitting down in silence to his newspaper-reading companion. (But instead of harrasing Ted into talking to him like a wife might, he sensibly just reads his comic.) Hoffman's boss, who once gossiped eagerly with him about ad accounts, squirms when in a man-to-man chat Hoffman regales him with stories of his kid's antics.

But what father and son have supercedes these difficulties. Inside their little castle of a New York apartment, they're free. They don't need Mommy anymore. Either of them.

Robert Benton is sensitive to criticisms of his portrayal of Joanna. "For a long time," he said to film critic

Andrew Sarris, "I've wanted to treat the subject of married love, which I think is much more interesting than romantic love. Eating breakfast in the morning, taking the garbage out at night and just being there all the time when you're needed and even when you're not particularly wanted, that sort of thing."

"The father-son relationship in *Kramer vs. Kramer* is just one of the many possibilities of married love. It is not meant to exclude all the others."

It's not meant to, but it does. We only see Joanna in public, and that we feel any sense of her person is a tribute to Meryl Streep.

No, the ones who are married here are the father and son, a perfectly elegant, if finally short circuited, family unit.

It's not just the wife who gets short shrift, either. The only other significant woman in the film, a saintly neighbor (Jane Alexander) is an abandoned mother who almost lives at her kids' playground and waits for her man to come back.

Finally the lack of Joanna undercuts the film's own purpose. The custody suit erupts out of nowhere. Suddenly the two parents fling tens of thousands of dollars worth of lawyers at each other. Why? We see little of the hate and fear that drive people into court on a personal issue that the court can only resolve a tiny corner of.

The ending too does not convince—it's unreal, a fairy tale resolution. But however unreal, the ending is appropriate to the fantasy. The boys have figured out how to run the family without her, and Mommy has the decency to step out of the picture.

Well, we all have to leave home sometime, and it always hurts. But in this movie Mommy leaves for them all. She not only bears her child and nurtures it for years, but also does its separation for it.

This was originally supposed to be a project for Francois Truffaut to direct, and there is an echo of the man-who-loved-women in its treatment of the wife as a mysterious, beautiful but always out-of-reach other. *Kramer vs. Kramer* also, however, undercuts that mystery with its earthbound accuracy. It's not just the minutiae—the bookbags, the interior decorations. It's also the interchanges that define people succinctly and make them more than stereotypes. This movie didn't have to be a buddy film in disguise. Benton has the insight and the skill to have made this family more than that.

In the end the advantages of having a film that evokes love between a parent and child, in a era so strangled in its discussion of personal life, probably outweigh the disadvantages. But the anti-Mom overtones in *Kramer vs. Kramer* suggest the enduring strength of ancient sex role traditions. A film that starts out by challenging the traditional family role for the woman does so at the expense of writing her out of the family altogether.